

X.—*Malmesbury Abbey.* By HAROLD BRAKSPEAR, *Esq., F.S.A.*

Read 3rd April, 1913.

THE once rich and mitred abbey of Malmesbury has provided a subject for many writers, and the remains of its church a model for artists and draughtsmen, but no one seems to have combined description and drawing to explain the history of this building. The writer, having been engaged professionally for many years upon the repairs of the church, has had exceptional opportunities for the study of the structure, and although much of necessity has been said before, some little fresh matter has been brought to light.

HISTORY OF THE MONASTERY.

Malmesbury stands on a steep hill surrounded by the waters of Avon and Newnton brook, save for a narrow neck to the north-west. In ancient days it must have been wellnigh impregnable, for the low-lying ground on all sides would have been impassable swamp. This natural stronghold was doubtless from the earliest time occupied for human habitation, though no direct evidence of such occupation has been found. In Roman days it seems to have been neglected, though the great north road from Bath passed within two miles of it, and there was a small station at Brockenburgh and a villa at Easton Gray.

About the year 640 an Irish teacher named Maeldubh settled here and founded a school and small church. He gained great repute, and Ina, king of Wessex, sent his nephew Aldhelm to study under him. Aldhelm became head of the school in 676, and from his time the importance of Malmesbury began.

Aldhelm converted the school into an abbey under regular rule. He enlarged the old church of Maeldubh and hallowed it in honour of the Holy Saviour, St. Peter, and St. Paul, and placed the dwelling for the monks adjacent.¹ He built not far off a new church of St. Mary, and another contiguous to it of St. Michael.²

In 705, upon the death of Hedda, bishop of Wessex, Ina divided the extensive see of Winchester and established a bishopric at Sherborne, to which he appointed

¹ William of Malmesbury (Rolls Series, 52), p. 345.

² *Ibid.*, p. 361.

his relative Aldhelm.¹ Aldhelm carried on his capacity for building in his new sphere by beginning the cathedral at Sherborne² and founding monasteries at Frome and Bradford-on-Avon.³ Aldhelm died in 709 at Doultling, and his body was conveyed by easy stages to the scene of his first labours at Malmesbury, where it was buried in the church of St. Michael, which he had built. The monks were then removed from Christ Church to St. Mary's, to be nearer the body of their founder.⁴

King Ethelwolf (837) caused the bones of St. Aldhelm to be placed in a silver shrine.⁵ A fire occurred in the time of King Alfred which burnt the monastery, and King Athelstan is said to have rebuilt it from the foundations.⁶ The shrine of St. Aldhelm was moved by Dunstan (955) to St. Mary's. He gave a pair of organs to the church, and later, for fear of the Danes, caused the relics of St. Aldhelm to be taken from the shrine and placed in a grave on the north side of the altar.⁷

King Athelstan gave lands to the monastery, and at his death in 941 was buried under the altar of St. Mary in the tower.⁸ Abbat Elfric (977-82) rebuilt the monastery.⁹ He appears also to have rebuilt the church.¹⁰ He was appointed to the see of Crediton in 977. A second fire destroyed the monastery in 1042.¹¹

Herman, the last bishop of Wilton, built a bell tower at Malmesbury,¹² and, dissatisfied with his residence, tried to induce the king (Edward the Confessor), whose chaplain he had been, to remove the see to Malmesbury, but the idea was frustrated by the abbat and monks through the powerful influence of Earl Godwin.¹³

The Norman invasion affected Malmesbury but little, save that the Saxon abbat was deposed, and a foreigner, Thorold of Fécamp, instituted in his stead. Thorold, being removed to Peterborough in 1070, was succeeded by Warin de Lyra, who replaced the relics of St. Aldhelm in their shrine.¹⁴ He also enlarged St. Michael's church, and caused the reputed relics of Saxon saints which were contained in vessels on either side of the altar to be buried.

In 1118 Roger, the domineering bishop of Sarum and chancellor of England, seized the abbey for his own use, and built a castle at Malmesbury to keep the monks in subjection.¹⁵ The site of the castle was apparently near the east gate of the town, though various writers have placed it at the west gate, forgetting that the cemetery which it is said to have encroached upon was that of the monks to the east of the church, and not the present parish churchyard.

¹ William of Malmesbury (Rolls Series), p. 375.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

¹¹ William of Malmesbury, p. 363.

¹³ William of Malmesbury, p. 420.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 405.

² *Ibid.*, p. 378.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 364.

¹⁰ Bohn's *Antiq. Libr.*, p. 139.

¹² Leland, *Collectanea*, i. 301.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 407-8.

¹⁵ Bohn's *Antiq. Libr.*, p. 505.

Roger died in 1139 and the monastery regained its rights, which are contained at length in an exemplification of Pope Innocent II, dated x kal. Junii 1142.¹

It is reasonable to suppose that, upon the restitution of the revenues to the abbey, the building of the great church, of which the present is a fragment, was contemplated. William of Malmesbury, the historian and inmate of the convent, wrote just before his death in 1143:

The spacious structure of the larger church was standing, and in size and beauty exceeded any other religious edifice in England.²

This clearly shows that the new church was not begun, but it may be imagined that the statement, considering that such churches as Winchester, Tewkesbury, and Gloucester were completed, was made in antagonism to the proposal by one who loved the old order of things. The new church at Malmesbury would be started at the east end in the usual manner and continued gradually westward.

King John, just before his death in 1216, granted to the abbat and convent 'the place in which is situated the castle of Malmesbury, with leave to pull down the buildings and erect others at their will'.³

Owing apparently to the influx of pilgrims to St. Aldhelm's shrine in the thirteenth century the presbytery was lengthened eastward, which work encroaching on the cemetery doubtless caused the building of the charnel for the reception of the disturbed bones. This was endowed with land at Fowleswick in 1267 for a chaplain, and a house was given for his use in East Street.⁴

William of Colerne became abbat in 1260 and died in 1296. He was a great benefactor to the convent, and during his abbacy caused to be made (1) a hall, with kitchen, larder, and a camera, next his garden; (2) the carpenter's shop with two houses; (3) the dorter to be remodelled; (4) the chapter-house to be remodelled; (5) a garner next the bakehouse; (6) a new brewhouse; (7) a new forge; (8) a poor house and stables; (9) a mill; (10) the chapel of St. Aldhelm in the garden; and (11) a new infirmary.⁵ In 1284 the water-pipes to the offices of the abbey were put down, and water first flowed into the lavatory on St. Martin's day. The expense of laying on the water from Newnton was £100.⁶

In the fourteenth century the central tower was raised and a high spire added, vaulting was put to the transepts and nave, and the clearstories were remodelled. Quite at the end of the century a square tower was built over the two western bays of the nave.

¹ *Registrum Malmesburiense* (Rolls Series, 1880), i. 352.

² William of Malmesbury, p. 361.

³ *Reg. Malmes.*, i. 340.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 123, 125.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 365 (see Appendix I).

⁶ *Ibid.*, ii. 361. 'Expensae circa conductum aquae. In aqua ducta ad officinas abbathiae per conductum anno Domini M^o.CC octogesimo quarto et anno regni regis E. xii. Et die Sancti Martini annis supradictis primo fluebat in lavarium, c. li.'

In the fifteenth century a new building was erected over the south aisle of the nave, and the alleys of the cloister were rebuilt and vaulted.

William Worcester, a native of Bristol, visited Malmesbury in the fifteenth century, and, as was his custom, stepped the principal sizes of the church, which, judging by dimensions which can be tested, are tolerably accurate and work out at about $19\frac{1}{2}$ in.¹ His notice of Malmesbury is as follows:

Longitudo totius ecclesiae monasterii Sancti Adelmi de Malmesbery cum choro continet 172 gressus meos ($279\frac{1}{2}$ ft.).

Latitudo ejus continet 42 gressus ($68\frac{1}{4}$ ft.).

Longitudo capellae Beatae Mariae in orientali continet 30 gressus ($48\frac{3}{4}$ ft.).

Latitudo capellae ejusdem continet 14 gressus ($22\frac{3}{4}$ ft.).

Longitudo claustrum ex omni parte continet quodlibet claustrum 64 gressus (104 ft.).

Latitudo navis ecclesiae principalis ultra alas continet 22 gressus ($35\frac{3}{4}$ ft.).²

Until a short time ago these dimensions were all that was known of the sizes of the eastern parts of the church, but now these have been checked by the discovery of certain foundations in the trenches of the stable buildings erected on part of the site of the south aisle of the presbytery, which will be described in their place.

The great and rich monastery of Malmesbury was the last in Wiltshire to fall under the Suppression by Henry VIII. It was surrendered by the abbat and twenty-one monks on 15 December, 1539, and its annual value at that time was £830 1s. $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. clear. The abbat was pensioned with 200 marks a year and a house with a garden in Bristol. The monks had pensions varying from £13 6s. 8d. to £6 a year.³ Fourteen years after only six survived, four of whom were married.⁴

The site and buildings were committed to the care of Sir Edward Baynton of Bromham, and of these certain were appointed to remain undefaced and others were deemed to be superfluous. Of the former were—

The late abbat's lodging, with the new lodging adjoining, the kitchen, buttery and pantry, with the lodging over the same. The late abbat's stable, the wool house, the barn at the spital gate. The gatehouse which encloseth the inner court, and the gatehouse which encloseth the outer court.

¹ *Itinerarium Willelmi Botoner* (Cambridge, 1778), p. 83. At Tintern he says: 'Mem. quod 24 steppys sive gressus mei faciunt 12 virgas. Item 50 virgae faciunt 85 gradus sive steppys meos.' An average of these two values seems about the correct unit.

² *Ibid.*, p. 283.

³ *Wills. Arch. Mag.*, xxviii. 318; *Mon. Ang.*, i. 256.

⁴ *An History of the Mitred Parliamentary Abbies*, Brown Willis (London, 1718), i. 140.

The buildings deemed superfluous were committed to the custody of William Stump, deputy of Sir Edward Baynton, and consisted of—

The church, cloister, and chapel adjoining.

The dormitory, chapter-house, frater, barbery, infirmary, with all the lodgings to them adjoining.

The cellarer's chamber, the squire's chamber, St. Mary's house, the charnel, the convent kitchen.

All the houses in the sextry end, the steward's lodging, the store house, the slaughter house, the guests' stable, and all other houses in the outer court.¹

The first of these were the chief buildings round the cloister, with the infirmary to the east.

The cellarer's chamber and convent kitchen were to the north-west of the cloister.

Saint Mary's house and the charnel were the house and chapel of the priests of the charnel in the abbey cemetery.

The church, quire, aisles, and steeples, the frater, chapter-house, our Lady's chapel, and the abbat's lodging were each covered with lead which was estimated at 120 foders, and in the steeples were nine bells.

There was one 'miter garnished with silver gilt, small pearls and counter-set stones', reserved to the king's use, together with 574 ounces of silver, silver parcel gilt, and white silver. Other ornaments had already been sold for £208 13s. 4d.¹

Whether the demolition of the church and other buildings 'deemed to be superfluous' was begun immediately upon the Suppression or not it is impossible to say.

Owing to the fact that 'the parish church of St. Paul is fallen even unto the ground', William Stump, in whose custody was the abbey, gave to the parishioners the nave of the abbey church to be used for their parish church, and licence to this effect was granted by Archbishop Cranmer at Lambeth, 20 August, 1541.²

It was not till three years after that the site of the buildings and lands in Rodbourne, Brinkworth and other places were formally granted to this same William Stump, who is styled 'generosus', for the consideration of the sum of £1516 15s. 2½d.,³ saving the bells, and the lead of the roof, gutters, and windows. In the particulars attached to this grant is a list of buildings similar to the first valuation, but with slight variations.

¹ *Aug. Off. Mis. Book*, 494 (see Appendix II).

² *Wills. Arch. Mag.*, i. 249.

³ *Rot. Pat.*, 36 Hen. VIII, pt. 25, m. ¼^o (see Appendix III).

At this time Malmesbury was visited by that indefatigable antiquary, John Leland, who relates:¹

Ther were in thabbay Chirch Yard 3. Chirches : thabbay Chirch a right Magnificent thing, wher were 2. Steples, one that had a mightie high *pyramis*, and felle daungerously in *hominum memoria*, and sins was not reedified: it stode in the midle of the *Transeptum* of the Chirch, and was a Marke to al the Countre about. the other yet standith, a greate square Toure, at the West Ende of the Chirch.

The Tounes Men a late bought this Chirch of the King, and hath made it their Paroche Chirch.

The Body of the olde Paroch Chirch, standing in the West[south] End of the Chirch Yarde, is clene taken doun. The Est Ende is convertid *in aulam civicam*.

The fair square Tour in the West Ende is kept for a dwelling House.

Ther was a litle Chirch joining to the South side of the *Transeptum* of thabby Chirch, wher sum say *Joannes Scottus* the Great Clerk was slayne about the Tyme of *Alfrede* King of *West-Saxons* of his own Disciples thrusting and strikking hym with their Table Pointelles.

Wevers hath now lomes in this litle Chirch, but it stondith and is a very old Pece of Work.

The hole logginges of thabbay be now longging to one *Stumpe*, an exce ding riche Clothiar that bouthe them of the King.

This *Stumpe* was the chef Causer & Contributor to have thabbay Chirch made a Paroch Chirch.

At this present tyme every Corner of the vaste Houses of Office that belongid to thabbay be fulle of lumbes to weve Clooth yn, and this *Stumpe* entendith to make a stret or 2. for Clothiers in the bak vacant Ground of the Abbay that is withyn the Toune Waulles.

The western tower of the abbey must have fallen shortly after Leland's visit, and the church authorities of the time built up a new west wall in line with the sixth pair of pillars, and walled up the seventh bay of the south aisle so as still to allow the south porch to be used as the entrance.

Early in the seventeenth century the first known drawing of the church was published in the *Monasticon Anglicanum*, and it shows that all four arches of the central tower were standing, and that the building over the south aisle remained with a flat roof. The western doorway was then complete.

John Aubrey, the Wiltshire antiquary, criticizes this drawing as 'ill done', and adds that

When the great rejoicing was on the King's birthday, 1660, for the return of King Charles II, here were so many and so great vollies of shot, by the inhabitants of the Hundred, that the noise so shook the pillars of the Tower, that one pillar and the two parts above fell down that night.²

¹ *Itinerary of John Leland* (Oxford, 1744), ii. 25.

² *Wiltshire Collections* (Devizes, 1862), p. 255.

From the end of the seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth the church remained without much alteration, save that about 1830 the present seats and gallery were put up, new tracery was inserted in the sixteenth-century west window, and the present lath and plaster vaulting erected over the fifth and sixth bays, under the direction of the late Mr. Goodrich, a Bath architect.

In 1899, the building having in many places become dangerous, a scheme of repair was undertaken through the influence of our fellow, the Lord Bishop of Bristol, and carried out under the charge of the writer. This work continued off and on for some years, but the only real alterations to the general appearance of the structure were the building up of the ruinous gap in the south wall of the nave and the repair of the two bays of the aisle beneath.

While these works were in progress excavations were made, through a grant from this Society, on the site of the south transept and quire, but nothing was found except a small patch of tile paving. The writer was afterwards told that when this part of the church was in private hands there were great and ugly heaps of débris, so that, to make it tidy, the then owner contracted with a builder to level the ground for what he could get out of it!

Later, in 1910, through the generosity of Mr. E. S. Mackirdy, the owner of the site of the cloister, and a small grant from this Society, further excavations were made to trace the cloister and site of the surrounding buildings, which will be described later.

THE PRECINCT.

Long before Malmesbury was walled, the monastery was established at the northern end of the hill upon which the town now stands. The precinct upon the hill contains about six acres,¹ and with the exception of a small area running towards the north-west is rectangular in shape, 560 ft. from east to west by 430 ft. from north to south (fig. 1). It was apparently entered on its south side through a gatehouse opposite the end of the High Street.

The great church stands, almost due east and west, nearly in the middle of the area, with the cloister to the north, but owing to the contracted space on that side the other buildings of the abbey spread out to the east and west.

The abbat's house was contained within a circuit wall of its own, protected by a gatehouse, and was to the east of the church.

The guests' quarters, under the charge of the cellarer, were to the west of the cloister, and also had a gateway of entrance—the Spital gate.

The present graveyard was always the lay folk's cemetery, and adjacent to it was 'the Seynt Mary house with the chaundery'. The monks' cemetery was round the east end of the church.

¹ The *Val. Eccl.* (II, p. 119) gives the area of the site that the building extended over as six acres.

The outer court was inside the great gate, now occupied by a brewery and a public-house. It is recorded in 1862 that 'in the narrow street leading from



Fig. 1. Plan of precinct, showing suggested boundary.

Malmesbury Cross to the Abbey House there was to be seen a few years ago the arch of an entrance gateway, part of the wall of which is still against a house'.¹

¹ *Wiltshire Collections*, p. 260, note.



Fig. 1. South side of nave, before repairs



Fig. 2. South side of nave, 1913

After 1216 the site of the castle, containing some two and a half acres, was given back to the monks and the area thrown into the precinct. This seems to have been unbuilt upon at the Suppression, and to be 'the bak vacant ground of the Abbay that is withyn the Toune waulles' of Leland. The land is still vacant, and a part of it is called the 'Bowling Green'.

The area of the precinct outside the town walls contained some 26 acres, in which were the mill, fish ponds, the vineyards, and farm buildings.

Of the sites of the Saxon churches nothing definite is known.

As the first church of the monastery was hallowed in honour of our Saviour, St. Peter, and St. Paul, it probably stood on the site of the later parish church, which now bears the clipped dedication of St. Paul.

The little old church noticed by Leland adjoining the south transept was probably St. Michael's, some traces of the original building being noticed by William of Malmesbury. Aubrey states, but without giving an authority, that the present abbey house occupies the site of this church.¹

The third church, St. Mary's, was somewhere on the site of its successor, the great twelfth-century church, but no trace of it has ever been found. Nothing of Elfric's rebuilt church is in existence above ground, nor does it seem to have influenced the setting out of the later church in any way.

THE CHURCH.

The great Norman church, of which the present is a fragment, consisted of presbytery with aisles and apsidal end, transepts with eastern chapels, a tower over the crossing, and a nave of nine bays with aisles and a great south porch.

The original presbytery might be expected to have followed the west-country fashion, like Gloucester, Tewkesbury, and Worcester, of having two or three straight bays with aisles, these latter being continued around an eastern apse with three small chapels projecting therefrom. Nothing remains above ground to show if this was the arrangement, but a foundation 12 ft. wide with rounded outer face occurs at 80 ft. from the east side of the crossing. When this is set down on plan it proves itself to have been the foundation of the outer wall of an ambulatory end, and gives three straight bays, of equal width to those of the nave, to the presbytery, like Gloucester. No indications of the three chapels have been found, but as they occurred in all other ambulatory ends it is obvious they existed here.

A fragment of the westernmost bay remains attached to the north-east pier of the crossing, and shows that the principal lines of the eastern arm were carried through into the nave. The main arcade springs from a respond similar to the

¹ *Wiltshire Collections*, p. 260.

eastern responds of the nave, but whether the arches were round or pointed cannot be determined with certainty. Above the arches is a string-course of saw-tooth ornament, having a flat band of enrichment beneath in the form of continuous arches. The triforium had round arches of two orders, of which the outer is ornamented with zigzag and carried by a detached column with scalloped capital. There appear to have been small arches like the nave, but in this case carried by a single half-octagonal column. There was a string-course in line with the springing of the crossing arches, above which is the clearstory passage. In the angle next the tower pier is a double column starting from a base at the triforium level and finishing with a scalloped capital under the clearstory string-course, which was doubtless repeated over each pier of the presbytery. The original capitals clearly prove that these columns were intended to support vaulting, and there is little doubt that the presbytery was so covered from the first; but as everything is destroyed above it is impossible to tell its character.

Externally the weathering over the aisle roof is in line with the string-course between the present clearstory windows of the nave, and there is no indication that the clearstory of the presbytery was remodelled on the north side.

William Worcester's 'steppys' indicate that the original presbytery had been lengthened to the extent of three bays. The church was then over three times the length of the present fragment, and the central tower was exactly midway between the east end of the Lady chapel and the west end of the nave. As already suggested, the lengthening took place about 1267, thus following the fashion of the time. Ely, Winchester, Worcester, Lincoln, and St. Albans were all extended eastward in the thirteenth century, for the sole reason of giving a sumptuous setting to the shrines of their great saints. At Malmesbury the shrine of St. Aldhelm would occupy the middle bay of the new work and have a small altar at its west end. The ends of each aisle would contain altars, and the aisles themselves would be used for passages for the pilgrims going to and from the shrine. The foundation of a wall, 7 ft. thick, was found some 8 ft. south of the line of the aisle wall opposite the easternmost bay, showing that the chapel was wider than the aisle, similar to the corresponding feature at Exeter.

As William Worcester includes the new bays in his total length of the church, there can be little doubt that they were carried to the full height of the presbytery, as at Ely. Two fourteenth-century bosses, now in the vestry, are said to have been found on the site of the presbytery, which if correct shows that the eastern arm was vaulted at that period like the rest of the church.

Whether the Lady chapel was part of the scheme of enlargement, as it was at St. Albans, it is impossible to say. The foundations of the two southern buttresses were found $14\frac{1}{2}$ ft. from centre to centre, showing that the chapel was

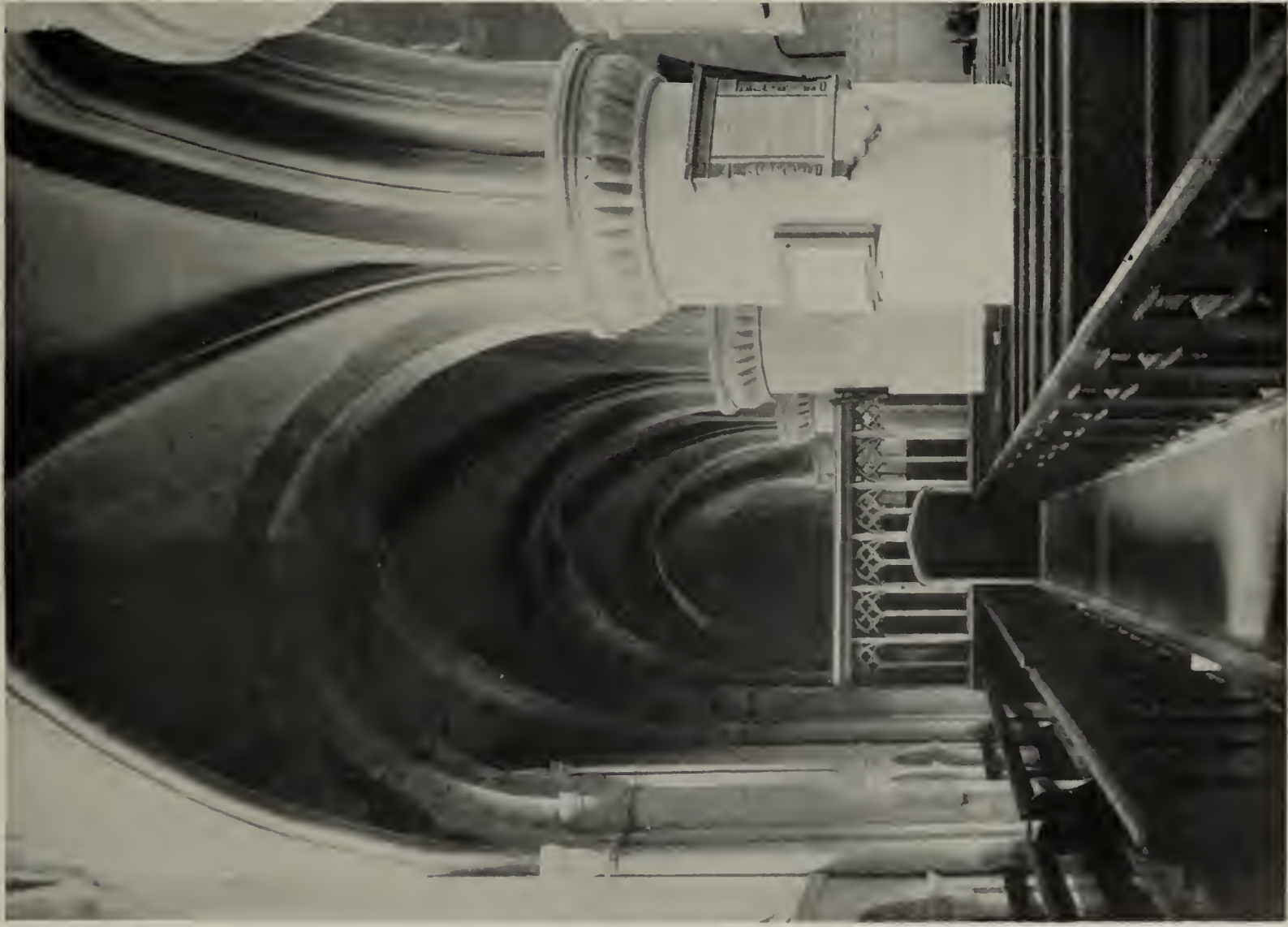


Fig. 1. North aisle of nave, looking east



Fig. 2. North arch of central tower

divided into three bays, it being $48\frac{3}{4}$ ft. long by $22\frac{3}{4}$ ft. wide according to Worcester's measurements. Some 25 ft. to the south of the easternmost bay a stone coffin was found.

The high altar would be in the centre of the apse, as at Winchester, Norwich, and St. Augustine's, Canterbury, and, as at those places, it does not seem to have been moved in later days.

The south transept was 50 ft. in length by 28 ft. wide, and doubtless had originally an apsidal chapel to the east. The whole has been destroyed save the west wall, which stands for two-thirds of its height. It is divided by half-round shafts into three bays of irregular widths, which are formed of three stages, as the rest of the church. The northernmost bay has in the first stage the pointed archway of two members of the nave aisle; the triforium stage is occupied by a round arch on scalloped capitals and jamb shafts embracing three small round arches carried by detached columns. This is built up solid to strengthen the abutment of the central tower, and the clearstory stage retains the northernmost jamb of a window of the fourteenth century of similar character to those of the nave, and the start of a vault of the same date which sprang from capitals about three feet above the string-course under the clearstory.

The two other bays are similar in design, though the southern is 21 ft. wide, so arranged to allow of a wide apsidal chapel opposite. In the lowest stage are round windows with deep splays and small columns at the internal angles, with a wall arcade of simple round arches on detached columns with cushion capitals. The triforium stage has a wall passage with a round-headed window, having detached jamb shafts internally, and on each side a narrow round-headed opening with continuous roll and a subsidiary arch at a lower level inside, similar to those at Worcester and Glastonbury. The clearstory has gone, but doubtless was a continuation of the fourteenth-century remodelling of the northernmost bay.

Externally the free bays had in the first stage window arches of two members, of which the outer is carried by a small attached jamb shaft, and beneath is a continuous wall arcade of interlacing arches. The second stage has a similar window arch, but the mouldings are bolder and the outer member is carried by a detached column. Under these windows is a billeted string-course, and above is a string-course ornamented with beads. None of the windows has ever been filled with tracery, but all retain their original inner members.

At the south-west angle is a bold square turret which contained a vice starting from the triforium level, of which the lower steps remain. Across the south side of this turret is the groove of a steep-pitched roof running southward,

but what was its purpose it is difficult to say ; there was no connexion between the church and this building.

In the middle of the south wall was another bold turret, in which was a vice starting from the ground and entered by a doorway in the second wall arch from the west.

Outside this turret was found a wall running southward, which was possibly the wall of the little old church seen by Leland.

On the east side of the middle bay was found a patch of the tile paving, but all the foundations had been grubbed up.

The north transept was presumably the same as the south. Of it remain the southern and part of the next bay of the west wall, and a fragment of the east wall attached to the north pier of the crossing.

What remains of the west wall is precisely similar to the corresponding part of the south transept. The southern bay of the triforium is blocked up for abutment to the tower ; the aisle arch was built up after the Suppression, and has in it a small square-headed doorway with a three-light square window over it.

The fragment of the east wall shows a respond of the aisle arch similar to those of the nave. The triforium is of two members, like the presbytery, with bold detached jamb shafts and cushion capitals, and the clearstory had a wall passage like the presbytery, but lined with ashlar, indicating that the fourteenth-century remodelling occurred on both sides of the transept.

The transept had originally a flat ceiling, on to which was a round doorway from the first gallery of the lantern—in fact, the lantern gallery would connect the spaces in the roof over each arm of the cross by means of similar openings.

A fragment of part of the foundation of the northern part of the west wall was found, with one course of its wall face next the cloister.

The crossing originally carried a great square lantern 44 ft. from north to south by 41 ft. from east to west, and still retains its north and west arches, with the responds and springers of the others.

The west arch is semicircular, and springs at 40 ft. from the floor off a slightly projecting corbel : there are no responds, but a couple of semi-columns recessed in the wall carry the line down to the floor. The arch is of three members with a label, and a curious feature is that each member is narrower at the springing than the apex. The innermost member is moulded and double, like that of the nave arcade.

The north arch is semicircular and similar to the west arch, but being much narrower is stilted considerably above the line of springing. It is carried on bold responds having half columns to take the inner member, and a nook shaft on either side to take the two outer members. The capitals are curiously moulded but not carved, and have square abaci.



Fig. 1. Exterior of west wall of transept



Fig. 2. Interior of west wall of transept

Above the arches internally ran an open arcade in front of a wall passage; it consisted on each side of the lantern of three main arches having front piers ornamented with beaded lozenges, and containing a pair of smaller arches carried on triple columns. The whole of this arcade and the wall passage was built up when the tower was raised, but three stones of the dividing piers show on the

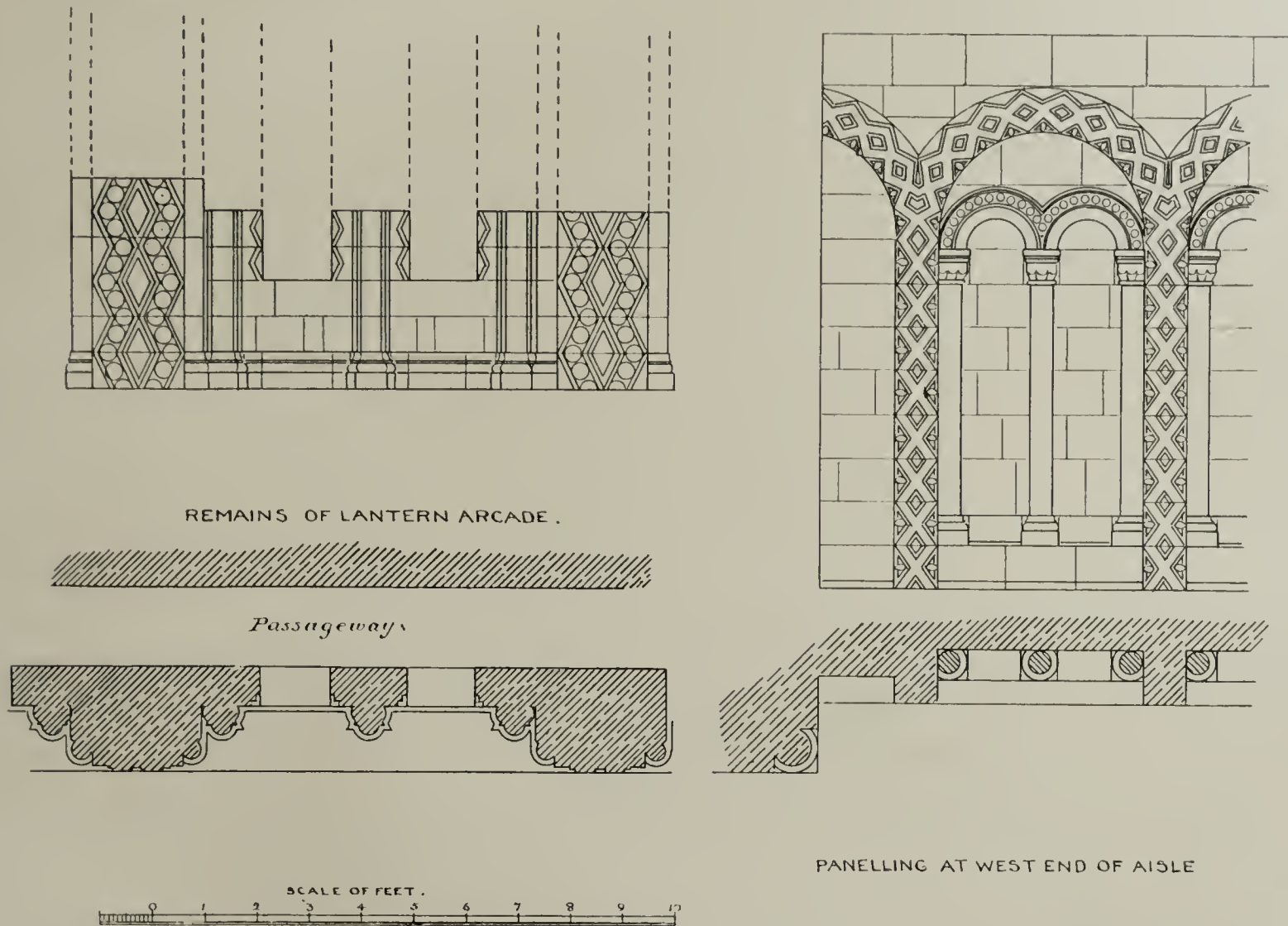


Fig. 2. Remains of lantern arcade and similar arcade at west end of nave to show suggested design.

north and west sides, and now the inner divisions have been opened out in the centre arch of the latter (fig. 2).

The tower was apparently raised towards the end of the fourteenth century, and the extra weight caused the heavy pillars to subside some 9 in. At the period when the lantern was done away with vaulting springers were inserted in each angle, and wall ribs were put at the same time as far as the dividing piers of the old lantern. These were afterwards completed to a different section, and a lierne vault with large bosses added.

A high spire was added to the tower in later times, apparently formed of wood and lead, and this is what Leland records¹ to have fallen *in hominum*

¹ *Supra*, p. 404.

memoria. If it fell before the Suppression it did little damage, as the church was standing complete when the *Valor* was taken in 1534, and it is unlikely Leland would have used the expression *in hominum memoria* if it had fallen afterwards or within two years of his visit. Over a hundred years later the memory of the spire and its fall was still fresh in the countryside, for Aubrey tells that

Hughes of Wootton Bassett saies that the steeple of Malmesbury Abbey was as high almost as Paule's and that when the steeple fell the ball of it fell as far off as the Griffin.¹

In 1634 a certain tourist visited Malmesbury and says, 'her great High Tower at the upper end of the high Altar much decay'd and ruined, the Angle there cleane decayd.'² This tower was little more than the four arches as shown in the drawing in the *Monasticon* of twenty-one years later. The weak angle, which was the south-east, as already shown, fell in 1660, bringing down the east and south arches, and in this condition it remains to-day.

There were nine bells in the two towers at the Suppression, estimated to weigh 15 cwt.,³ and Aubrey says that in the central tower 'was a great Bell, called St. Aldhelm's Bell, which was rung when it did thunder and lighten to send the tempest from the Town into the Country'.⁴ Brown Willis records

that the Steeples were replenished with several Bells, no less than ten, as the Inhabitants informed me, hanging together in the middle Tower and two in the western one. On one of them was this Inscription :

Elysiam coeli nunquam conscendit ad aulam,
Qui furat hanc nolam Aldelmi sede beati.

But, however, this Inscription did not protect either this or any other of the Bells from Sacrilege. For there are now none left belonging to the Abbey-Church.⁵

When the nave was made into the parish church the west arch of the crossing was walled up, and a buttress was built in the middle to strengthen the work.

The nave was of nine bays, 122 ft. in length, and had aisles; the total width is 69 ft. The first six bays remain complete, together with the remaining bays of the south aisle.

Each bay consists of three stages: the main arcade, the triforium, and the clearstory. The main arcade has short cylindrical columns 5 ft. in diameter, with moulded bases and scalloped capitals, surmounted by slightly pointed arches of three orders with a billeted label ornamented with dragon-headed terminals, and a most unusual feature, a grotesque head at the top biting the apex

¹ *Wiltshire Collections*, p. 256.

² *Graphic and Historical Illustrator*, E. W. Brayley (London, 1834), p. 411.

³ See Appendix II.

⁴ *Wiltshire Collections*, p. 255.

⁵ *An History of the Mitred Parliamentary Abbies*, Brown Willis (London, 1718), i. 136.

of the label. From the capitals start the vaulting shafts, consisting of three half-rolls with fillets between.

Above the arcade is a deep splayed string-course, which was ornamented with a Greek key pattern on the splay and continued round the vaulting shafts.¹

The triforium has in each bay a single round arch, slightly depressed, containing four small arches, except in the easternmost bay,² where there are only three. The main arch is of three members, of which the middle is ornamented with the chevrons set square, and is supported on moulded jambs having a detached column in each and continuous scalloped capitals. The smaller arches are semicircular and moulded, and are supported on monolithic columns having square cushion capitals. The jambs of the triforium are in many cases set crookedly by carelessness, not intentionally. The vaulting shaft continues through this stage. Above the triforium is a plain splayed string-course, over which internally all sign of the Norman work ceases, though up above the present vaulting the Norman roof shafts continue to the top of the walls in the three eastern bays.

Externally the original clearstory wall remains in the first three bays from the crossing. The bays were separated from each other by narrow pilasters having columns in the angles, and each contained a large round-headed window. The jambs and arches of the windows have been removed by later work, but on the wall face surrounding them are round plaques $19\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter, four up each jamb and seven round the arch (fig. 3). This feature is without parallel in this country, though the plaques themselves are precisely similar to some in the spandrels of the west doorway of Kenilworth Church. The plaques surrounding Urban's arch at Llandaff are somewhat similar but smaller, and do not follow down the jambs. The aisle bays internally are separated by a group of three columns, with cushion capitals to take the cross and diagonal ribs of the vault, which still remains complete. The former is a pointed arch of one order unmoulded, and the latter are semicircular and moulded to the same section as one of the innermost members of the main arcade. There is a wall arcade of three round arches with a bead worked on the angle in each bay, having detached columns with cushion capitals and moulded bases, and resting on a stone seat. Over these is a string-course having zigzags worked on the face and chamfer alternately. Above this are the aisle windows, semicircular, with deep splays and small columns to the internal angles.

¹ Beyond the rood-screen westward this string has had the ornament cut off in monastic times and formed into a plain chamfered course.

² This bay was built up solid apparently in the fourteenth century to give extra abutment to the tower, and is so shown on an old drawing. The blocking was removed in 1836 at the time when both triforia were built up for warmth.

Externally the bays are divided by pilasters with shafted angles finished at the top with beasts' heads swallowing the shaft, and at the bottom with moulded bases. The aisle windows are semicircular, with chamfered labels, and have small columns in the jambs with capitals and bases as on the inside. Under the windows is an arcade of interlacing arches resting on short moulded columns with scalloped capitals and finished by a double chamfered plinth.

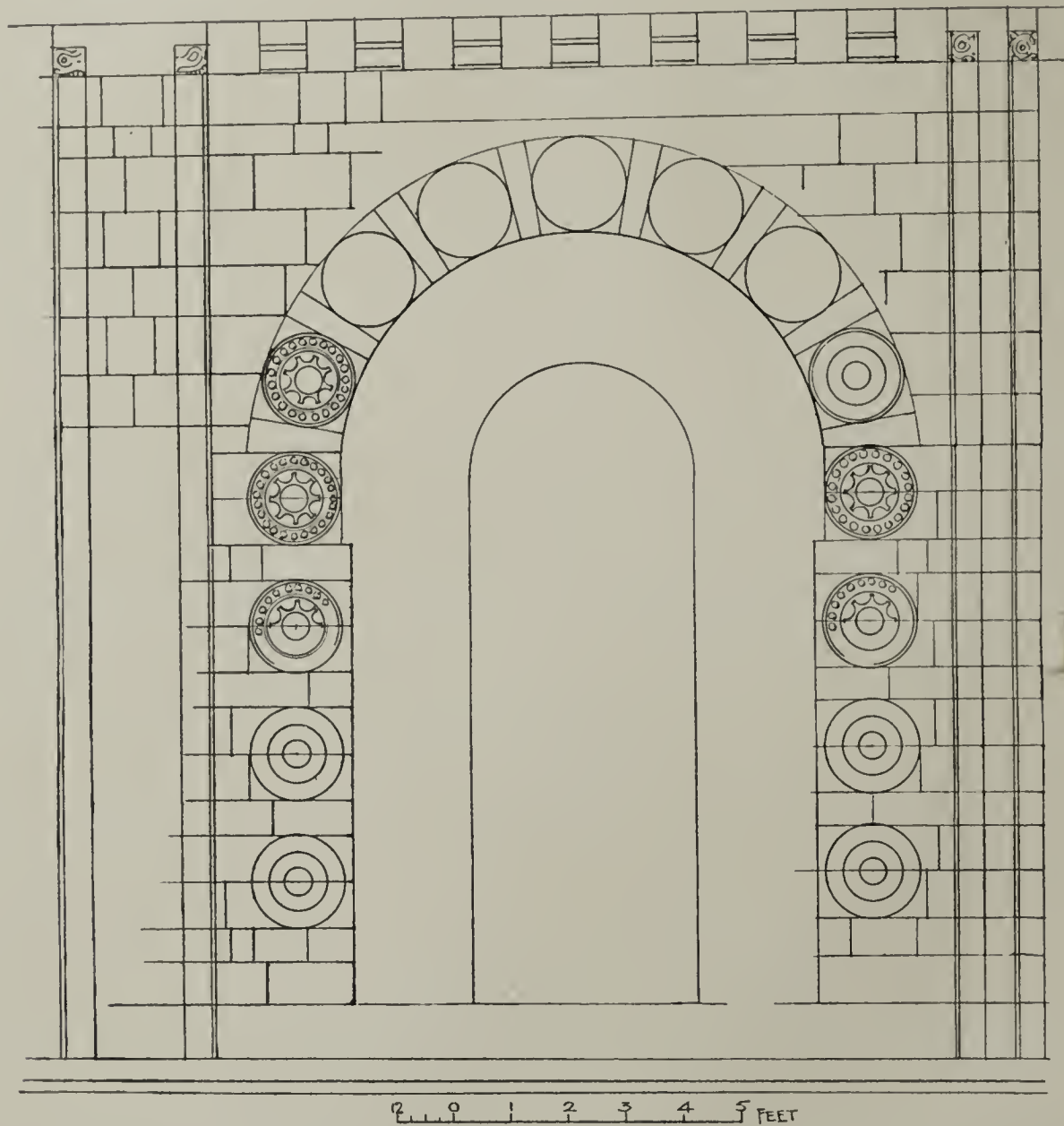


Fig. 3. Elevation of Norman clearstory windows: nothing remains to indicate the arrangements of the inner members.

On the north side, where was the cloister, the aisle windows are similar in character to those on the south, but the sills are kept much higher so as to clear the cloister roof. In the first bay was the processional doorway by which the convent gained the church, and, though now blocked, the original Norman arch still shows. On this side it will be seen that the eastern bay of the wall arcade has been moulded, whereas the remainder is left with plain square



Fig. 1. Buttresses and pinnacles of nave, before repair

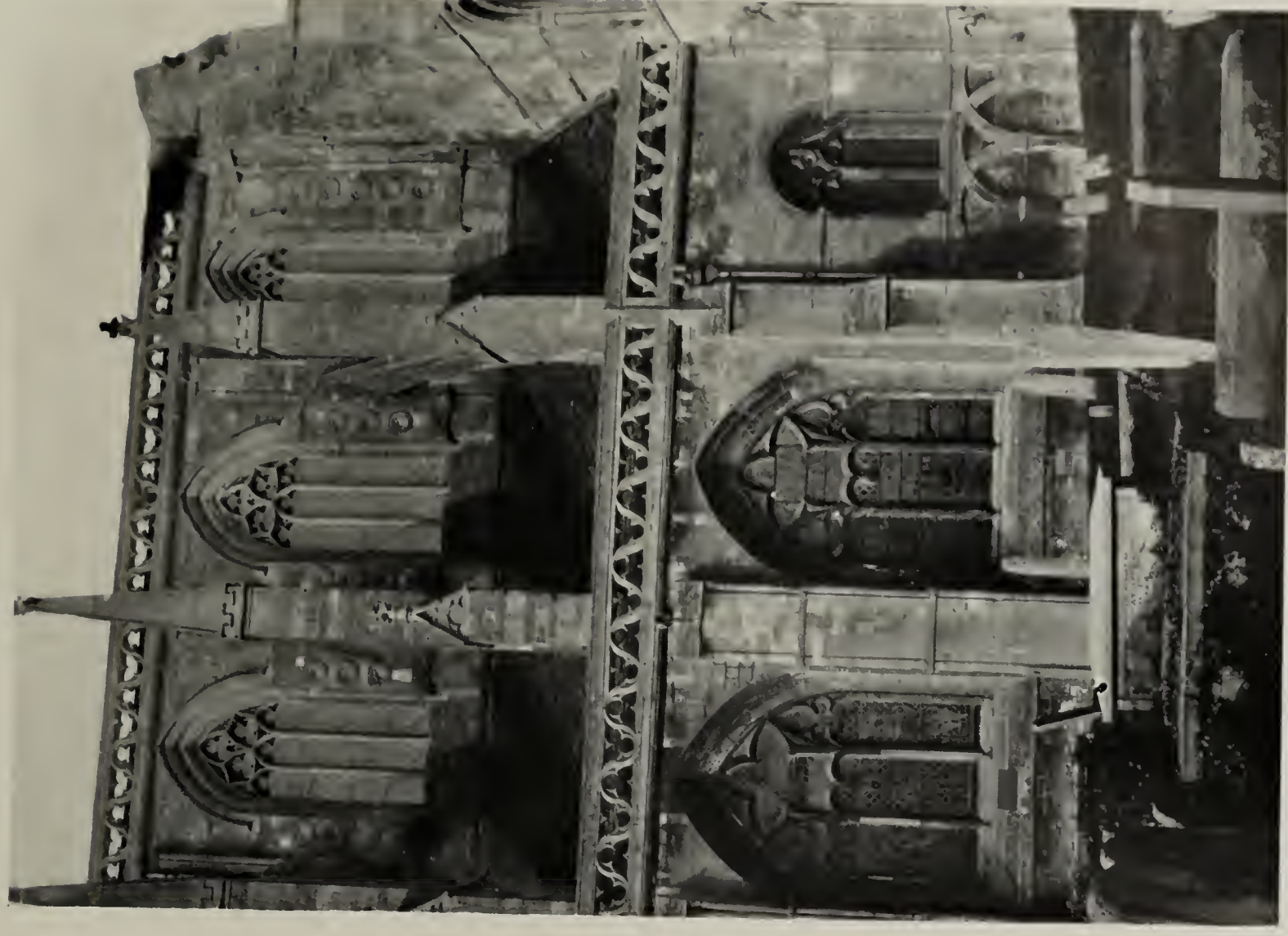


Fig. 2. The three eastern bays of nave

arches. The string-course above is alike throughout, and has a zigzag on the splayed face.

Early in the fourteenth century the clearstory stage of the nave was remodelled, owing to the desire to vault this part of the church in place of the old timber ceiling.

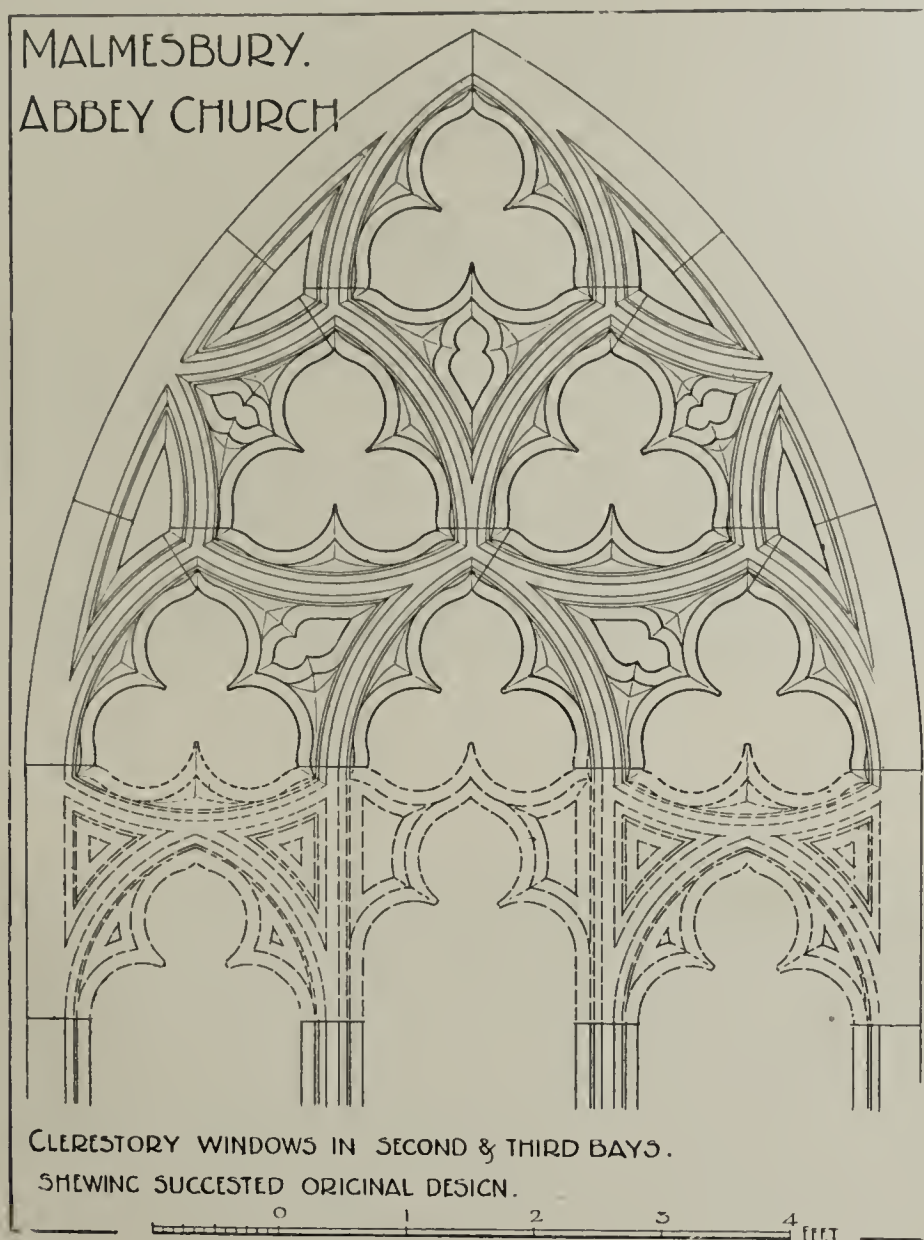


Fig. 4. Clearstory window : suggested design.

In the first bay from the east a tall two-light window was inserted within the Norman window and the wall passage built up solid.¹ In the next two bays three-light windows were inserted, but the wall passage was allowed to remain. The tracery of these windows was at first designed with the springing some 23 in. lower than at present, and the large trefoils were six in number

¹ The small size of these windows and the doing away of the wall passage were to give additional support to the tower.

with little cusped openings pointing to the middle, and were finished with trefoiled heads to the lights (fig. 4).¹

When the work had proceeded to this point apparently more money was forthcoming, for in the remaining bays up to the west end the Norman work was entirely taken down, and the clearstory was built afresh from the string-course over the triforium. The windows of this part are of one design throughout, three lights with tracery of three trefoils in the heads and with one small cusped opening to each trefoil. After these windows had been built the lower part of the tracery of the second and third bays was cut out and a curved rib to form the inner half of the outer lights was placed across the original little cusped opening so as to make all the windows uniform.²

The vaulting springs from carved capitals in line with the string-course over the triforium, and consists of cross, diagonal, and apex ribs, with liernes from the apex of the cross ribs taken part way down the diagonals and up again to the apex of the wall ribs, all having large leafwork bosses at the intersections.

To support the vault externally bold flying buttresses were added across the aisles springing from piers built upon the aisle walls. These piers have gabletted fronts and leafwork terminals, of which the third on the north is the only original one left, surmounted by tall square pinnacles with battlemented tops and tall plain spirelets.³ All the flyers are alike except the easternmost pair. This is of thinner and poorer design, and appears to have been put up later to balance the others. The builders of the vault in the first place seem to have trusted to the original walls to take its thrust, and quite rightly, for it was found when these flyers were repaired that none was taking any pressure.

The clearstory wall, on the south side, is finished by an openwork trefoiled parapet of running pattern carried on a projecting moulded cornice, in which is a stone spout over each flyer. The tops of the flyers, on the south side only, are hollowed to take the water from the spouts, a function they still perform, though now the spouts are fitted with down pipes which are carried in half pipes down the hollows. On the north side is a similar cornice and spouts, but the parapet is quite plain, and the present weathering is modern.

The south aisle is finished like the clearstory with an openwork parapet and projecting cornice, and has spouts for water over each buttress. The first buttress was renewed when the parapet was added, and has the shaft of a small

¹ The great north window of Exeter Cathedral consists of seven lights, of which the outer three are arranged so exactly like those at Malmesbury that the same hand seems to have been employed on both works. The Exeter window was erected in 1280.

² In the second window on the south some of the added ribs fell out, and the rest were removed to show the original design, but in the third bay they remain as altered.

³ The terminals of these had all gone, save the easternmost on the south side, but new ones were added in 1900.

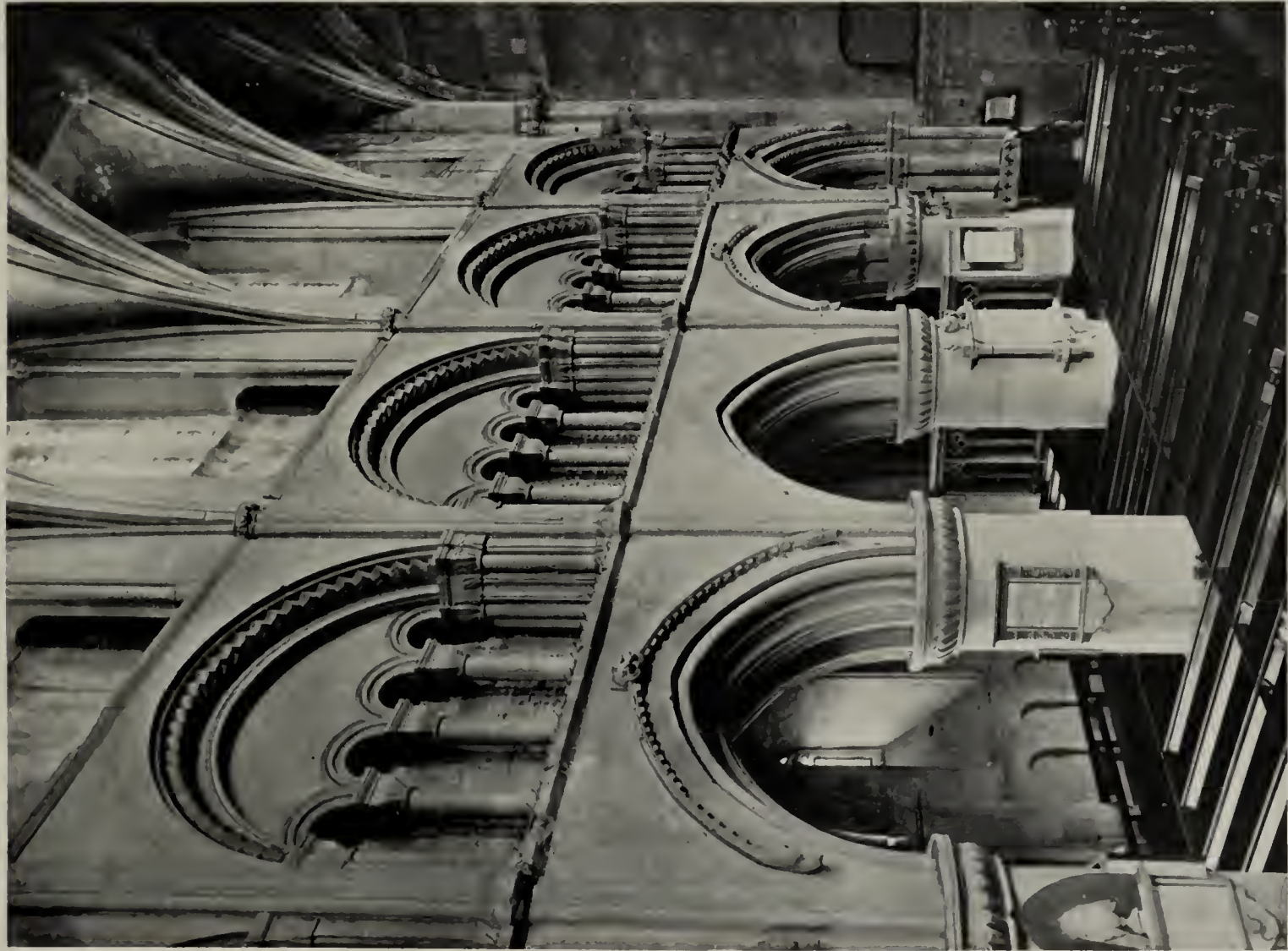


Fig. 1. Interior of nave, north side



Fig. 2. Interior of nave, south side

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pinnacle set diagonally running up from it through the parapet. Probably it was intended to treat the buttresses at each bay in this manner, but the scheme was abandoned. The second and third bays, in order to give extra light to the retro-quire, have had a large window inserted in each.

The original wall arcade was removed inside and out, as the sills are much below the Norman ones. The windows are each of three lights of peculiar design, having a large opening in the head evidently to contain seraphim. The jambs externally are plain splays, and the arches of two chamfered members. Internally there is a moulded member following the tracery, and a wide splay back to the vaulting shafts. These windows have been filled with inferior modern glass.

In the fourth bay of the north aisle, which was a small chapel, a large three-light window was placed in the fourteenth century, having its head within a small gable above the aisle gable. The vaulting inside is ingeniously arranged, having had the field of the northern quarter of the original vault removed and a new ribbed vault thrown off the old diagonal to clear the new window. The north aisle was capped by cornice and parapet similar to the clearstory above.

In the first, fourth, fifth, and last bays of the south aisle the windows have been divided by a mullion with cusped lights and a quatrefoil in the head put in towards the end of the fourteenth century. The eighth bay was blocked when the porch was cased, but the window was again opened out when the tracery was inserted in the other windows and similar tracery put to this. All the windows on the north side except the fourth have similar inserted tracery. In the easternmost window are preserved some fragments of fourteenth-century grisaille, the only vestige of old glass that remains; the rest seems to have been destroyed in the Rebellion. 'Mr. Weekes of the Royal Society remembers curious painted glass windows before the Warres in the Abbey-Church.'¹

Projecting from the seventh bay is the great south porch, which has been the main entrance to the church from the time it was built. Externally the walls have been cased with later work, but the magnificent arch of entrance, the interior of the porch, and the inner doorway remain much as the Norman builders left them. The entrance arch is of no less than eight members, unbroken between jambs and arch, and each is richly carved. The outermost, the third, fifth, and innermost members are decorated with conventional leafwork, the seventh member has beaded lozenges interlocking each other at the angles. The second, fourth, and sixth members are larger than the others, quarter round on plan, and are divided into pointed oval panels sculptured with figure subjects. Those in the arch are from Bible story, beginning with the creation of man on

¹ *Wiltshire Collections*, p. 257.

the left side of the sixth member, on which are eleven panels. On the arch of the fourth member are fourteen panels. On the arch of the second member are thirteen panels, beginning with the Annunciation and ending with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Whitsun. In the jambs of this order are four panels on either side containing an erect figure overcoming a prostrate one, which, though much mutilated, no doubt represent the Virtues overcoming the Vices. In each jamb of the other sculptured members are eight round panels, thirty-two in all, and these are much defaced, and the subjects of those that do remain are not distinctive.

The porch is vaulted with bold three-quarter round diagonal ribs carried by detached columns in each angle, having scalloped capitals. All the vault except the first springing stones of the ribs is modern, having been erected in 1905 in place of an unsightly brick barrel. On each side wall are arcades of four arches, carved with a double row of very small zigzags on the face and another on the soffit, supported on scalloped capitals and detached columns, of which the angle ones remain, but the others are lost. There is a stone seat on either side, but at a higher level than the original ones, upon which the arcade would rest.

In the spandrils of the vault, on either side of the porch, are two groups of six seated figures with a flying angel above. It has been suggested that this work, which is on a large scale and of rude execution, is of earlier date than the porch itself; but this theory will not hold, for, apart from the character of the figures, which is identical with those of the entrance arch, the carving has been executed in position upon the ordinary ashlar facing. There is no doubt that the figures represent the twelve apostles, but none has a distinctive attribute except the northernmost on the west side, who holds keys to indicate St. Peter. Opposite St. Peter is probably St. Paul,¹ holding a book, and it is noteworthy that only three other figures hold books, so that these may be identified as St. Matthew, St. James, and St. John, the other apostolic writers.

The inner doorway has three members with continuous jambs and arch, all richly carved with conventional foliage. The head is filled with a tympanum, having flat soffit and radiating joints, upon which is a seated figure of our Lord within a vesica held up by a pair of flying angels. The door is of two valves with plain covering strips to the joints, and has plain strap hinges. The lower part of the west half is formed into a wicket with rounded head, and the whole seems to date from the end of the sixteenth century.

In the north-east angle of the porch is a roughly inserted recess for the holy-water stock of late fifteenth-century date.

In the fourteenth century, when so much work was done to the nave, the

¹ So usually included with the Twelve in place of Mathias in medieval carvings.



Fig. 1. South porch, outer arch



Fig. 2. West end, before repairs

walls of the porch were thickened to no less than 10 ft., large double buttresses were put to the southern angles, and a new two-membered arch without capitals was added on the south side in front of the original Norman one. The old mask terminals from the original label have been reused in the new arch. The casing is carried up to the top of the aisle walls, where it is finished with the same moulded cornice and openwork parapet as to the aisles. The water-shoots in this case are carved into bold gargoyles, of which there are two on the south and one on either of the other faces. The buttresses have at the level of the arch springing a deep string-course, above which are sets-off of five courses, and the tops are finished with sets-off of eleven courses to the under-side of the cornice.

In the sixth bay of the aisle is an inserted doorway of the fifteenth century, containing the original door with tracery in the head. This gives on to a vice of the fourteenth century, which blocks up the aisle window and leads to the room over the porch. This is entered through a low pointed segmental-headed doorway, and has windows in each face. On the south is a two-light window with square head, and in the east and west sides are single-light windows,¹ all having flat oak lintels on the inside. In the north wall is a small loop looking into the church, which had a segmental rear arch.

The object of the thickening of the walls of the porch may not be certain, but considering the bold buttresses, quite out of proportion to the thrust of the vault, and the awkward way they stop at the top, there is little doubt it was intended to carry it up as a square tower, the idea being abandoned when it was determined to build one over the west end of the nave. A tower in this position does not now exist in any of our large churches, but it occurs at the priory churches of Edington and Bruton, and did exist at St. Radigund's, near Dover, and at Walsingham.

The original west front was a prototype of Salisbury, being a great screen wall flanked by turrets and covered with wall panelling. Of this screen the portion covering the south aisle remains to nearly the height of the main wall of the church, and is divided into two stages. The lowest stage is occupied by an interlacing arcade like that in the south aisle and transept; the second stage is unpanelled, and has a round-headed window with a zigzag arch and pelleted label, scalloped capitals, and jamb shafts; the third stage is separated from the last by a billet-ornamented string-course, and is divided into two whole and two half panels with continuous jambs and arches ornamented with double zigzag, of which the two middle arches are subdivided into two small arches ornamented with pellets and supported on detached columns with scalloped capitals.

¹ The side windows were built up solid, but have recently been opened up and the outer jambs restored.

Above this is a very richly corded string-course. The fifth stage is divided into five plain beaded panels with arched heads but no capitals. Above are two sets-off and a plain face of wall apparently of later date.

The first, second, and third strings pass round the pilaster opposite the main wall, which contains a vice from the aisle roof upwards to the clearstory passage.

On the south-west angle turret the first and second strings are continuous, and between them are two plain beaded panels on each face, having on the west face a sub-arch at a lower level, like those in the transept passage. Above the second string is an arcade of interlacing arches on detached columns with scalloped capitals, surmounted by the corded string-course of the third stage of the aisle, but at a higher level. Above are the remains of a richly panelled stage, having twisted columns at the angles, continuous lozenge bands on either side, and then an equal number of panels to those below having square pillars with beaded edges and hollows with pellets on the face. This stage is continued on the east face of the turret.

The vice contained in the turret starts from the aisle of the church and continues to the triforium level, where is a wall passage northward, off which goes the vice already mentioned to the clearstory, and a greeze ascends to the sill of the west window. The original vice continues upwards, though of smaller radius, and apparently led to the top of the west front, from which the nave gutters could be gained.

The central portion of the original front has been destroyed save for the southern half of the lowest stage. This has the continuation of the interlacing arcade and the south jamb and part of the arch of the west doorway.

The doorway consisted of five members, of which the outer, the third, and fifth are carved with leafwork, and are continuous in arch and jamb. The second and fourth members were intended to have been carved like the south doorway, and the outer member was so treated, but the fourth member is still in block. Both these members are carried on jamb shafts having carved capitals and square abaci.

Above the doorway is a band of plain ashlar surmounted by a moulded string-course of the end of the fourteenth century, and at 8 ft. from the south pilaster is the jamb of the great window of the same date, with its springer at 24 ft. above the sill. The window seems to have been of eight lights, and had four lines of transoms with cusped heads.

When this window was inserted a great square tower was built above the two western bays of the nave in a similar way to that of the same date at Hereford.¹ The west, north, and south sides were carried upon the old Norman

¹ Shrewsbury Abbey tower, of similar date, was built from the ground with solid side walls.



Fig. 1. South porch, inner doorway before repairs



Fig. 2. South porch, detail of east side of outer arch

walls, and a great arch was thrown across the nave, above the vaulting, to take the east side. The springer of this arch remains on the south, and is of three plain members.

The two columns and the piers of the triforium and clearstory above, which carried this arch, were from the first insufficient for the additional weight of the tower, and to remedy this as far as possible various devices were adopted. Flying arches were inserted across the clearstory window and triforium arch of the third bay from the west, and the main arch of the arcade was underbuilt. The small arches of the triforium of the two western bays were built up solid, but nothing remains to show if any corresponding strengthening was effected in the clearstory. In the opposite direction, to take the thrust of the east arch, an arch was placed beneath the vaulting in the aisle, and above, outside the earlier flying buttresses, an extra pier was built to carry additional flyers, the lowest of which still remains on the south. These buttresses had the support of the west wall of the porch on the south, and the west wall of the cloister on the north.

This tower contained two of the nine bells which hung in the steeples at the Suppression, and was standing at Leland's visit. It must, however, have fallen very shortly after, though no record exists of the calamity. The east side was from the first an insecure structure, and the removal of the west wall of the cloister doubtless started the collapse. Certain it is that the tower fell northward, destroying three bays of the main wall of the nave with the aisle, and bringing down in its fall no less than five bays of the main vault. Instead of any attempt being made to re-erect the fallen building, a solid wall was erected across the church in line with the sixth pair of piers, having bold buttresses opposite the main walls, and banded by string-courses in line with the springers of the main arcade and main vaulting. In the south buttress, to light the aisle, is a small square-headed window. The wall was pierced by a large pointed window, round which the upper string continues as a label. What the original filling of this was it is impossible to say, as in 1836 the present tracery was inserted and took the place of plain square mullions and transoms, apparently of wood.

The south aisle had a blocking wall put under the strengthening arch on the west side of the seventh bay, and also in the small pieces of the arcade beyond the new buttress.

The north aisle had a thick wall built across it opposite both the fifth and sixth pier, and these are carried up nearly to the springer of the clearstory windows. When it is remembered that the main vault was destroyed and no effort made to re-erect it, the use of these great buttress walls is difficult to explain, unless they show the intention, afterwards abandoned, of building here a small tower to take the place of the fallen one. In the bay thus cut off is an inserted doorway of the date of the foregoing work.

Over the six western bays of the south aisle a low building was added in the fifteenth century, having an almost flat roof, the inserted weather-course for which remains on the piers of the buttresses. It was reached by a continuation of the vice to the room over the porch, and had a second entrance through the opening of access, at the west end, to the space under the aisle roof. The building is shown in the view in the first *Monasticon*, and had square windows in its two eastern bays. It was removed before 1733, when the brothers Buck made their drawing. The use of this building is not certain, one suggestion being that it was the library, as that building occupied the space over the south aisle at Norwich and Worcester, but in those cases the cloister was on the south. Also, as the 'lyberary' is coupled with the frater, in the grant to Stump, it is unlikely to have been this building, which is as far from the frater as it is possible to be placed. It is now suggested, but with diffidence, that it was for one of the numerous schools in connexion with a great Benedictine house, and, as the projecting place for the nave organs opened from it, the building may have been for the song school, the master thereof being the organist.

Great abbey churches were, except in a few cases, built for the exclusive use of the convent, and not for congregational purposes; neither were they or any church ever intended to impress the visitor with an unbroken vista from end to end. After the drastic sweepings which all our great churches have undergone, especially at the hands of so-called restorers of modern days, it is difficult to realize what the effect of one must have been with all the chapels, altars, screens, and fittings complete. Fortunately at Malmesbury there still remain indications of some of the internal fittings which enable the principal arrangements to be traced.

Under the western arch of the crossing is a solid stone screen, capped by a cornice bearing the badges of Henry VII with the royal arms in the middle over a doorway which led into the quire.

The quire was beneath the crossing and one bay of the presbytery, and the stalls had canopies which were supported at the backs by a beam let into the crossing piers.

Just in front of the first pair of pillars in the nave was an openwork stone screen across the full width of the church, and the portions in the aisles still remain. Between this screen and that already described was a loft or gallery known as the *pulpitum*, from which the gospels and epistles were sung on holy days, and it generally held a pair of organs for the quire services.

At the third pair of pillars was another cross screen, above which was the beam to carry the great rood. In front of this was the nave altar, with a doorway in the screen on either side. In the triforium just above is a stone box-like projection, which was apparently built to hold the organs for the nave altar



Fig. 1. South porch, apostles on east side

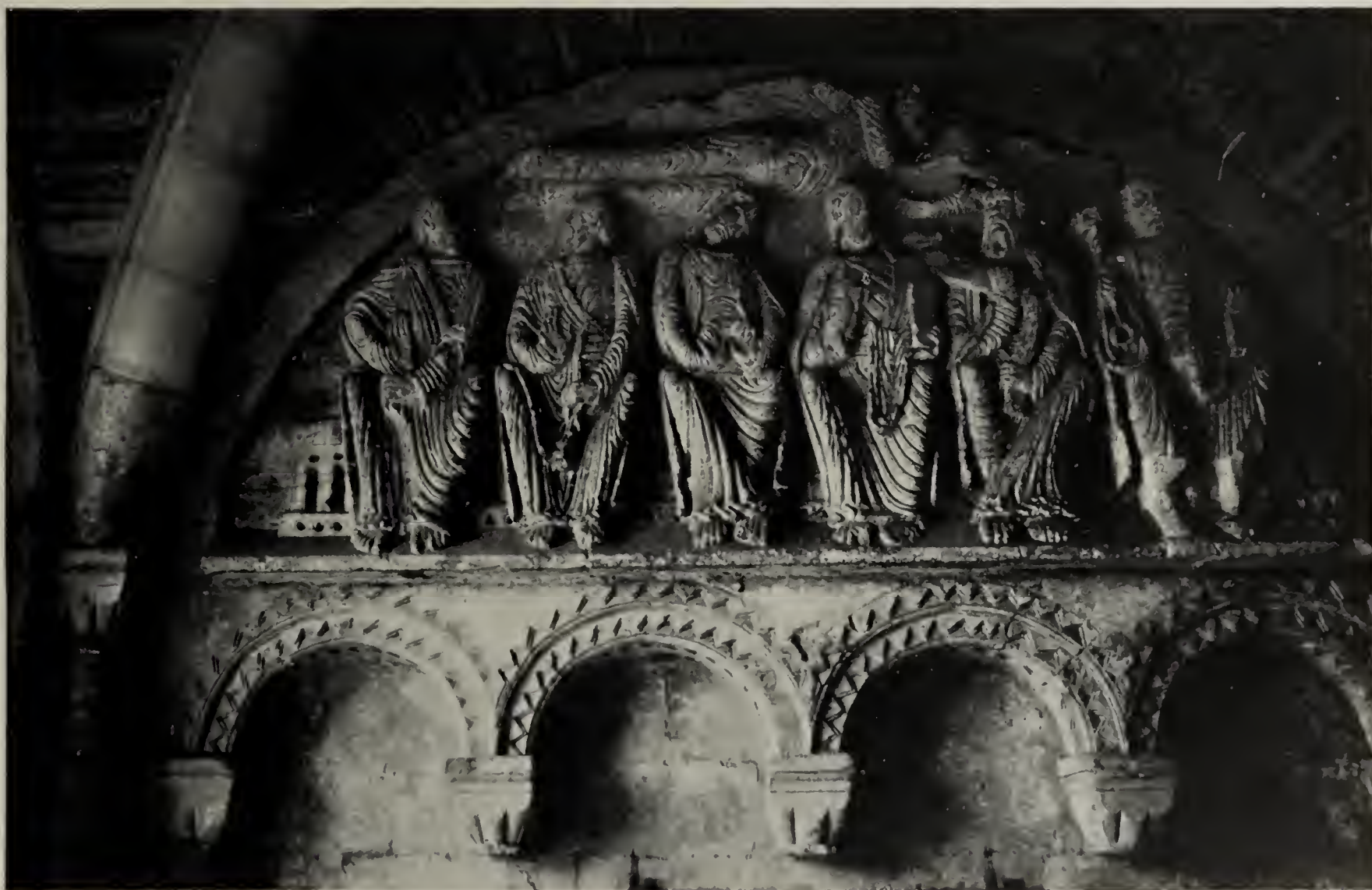


Fig. 2. South porch, apostles on west side

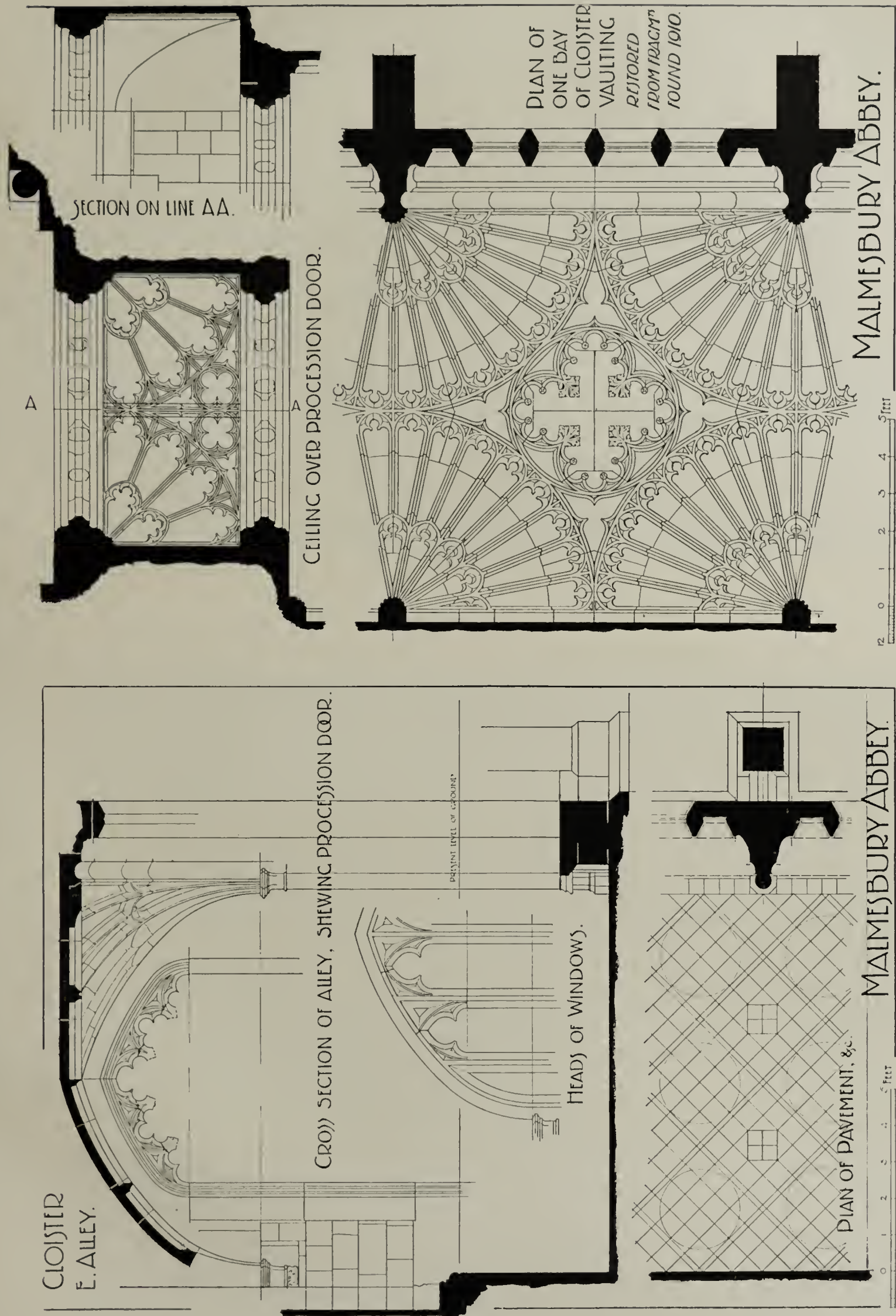


Fig. 5. Sections and plan of cloister restored from remains found in 1910.

services, and not, as usually supposed, to contain a patient watcher, who could see little or nothing beyond a detailed elevation of the nave wall opposite.

The fourth bay of the aisles on both sides was parted off by screens to form chapels flanking the nave altar.

Between the rood-screen and the *pulpitum* was a space called the *retroquire*, where at Durham were seats 'where men dyd sytt to rest theme selves on & say their praiers and here devyne service'.¹

Westward of the nave altar the nave and aisles were usually clear of fittings, and no indications of any now remain at Malmesbury.

Last, but not least, must be mentioned the monument called King Athelstan's. This is now placed under the first arch of the nave on the south side, and is a plain altar-tomb of the fifteenth century, supporting an effigy which has a fine canopy at the head. In the Rebellion the head of this figure was broken off by some soldiers, but was quickly mended by the inhabitants of the borough; but the new head had grown a beard in accordance with the fashion of the time.²

THE CLOISTER.

The cloister in the first place was most accurately set out, being exactly 112 ft. in each direction. There would be pentises against each wall, carried on open arches with coupled columns standing on dwarf walls. The base of such a pair of columns was found used up as old material in the north-west corner of the later work, and dated from the latter part of the twelfth century.

In the fifteenth century the cloister alleys were rebuilt and covered with a fan vault after the fashion set at Gloucester. The floors were paved with pattern tiles. Of this rebuilding a considerable part of the plinths of the walls next the garth remains, together with the paving. These were exposed by excavation, and at the same time such a quantity of fragments of the vaulted ceiling was found that it is quite easy to recover the design of the alleys.

Each alley was divided into eight clear bays, and was about 11 ft. wide. The bays were separated externally by bold buttresses formed of square piers, from which flyers would rise to take the thrust of the vault, similar to those of the fourteenth century to the south aisle of the nave at Gloucester. Internally there were round columns, with moulded octagonal bases and capitals, to take the vaulting, of which the springing was $9\frac{1}{2}$ ft. above the floor. The windows had simple splayed mullions and jambs of one member contained internally in a recess, across which was a seat with splayed nosing (fig. 5).

Each bay was virtually square, and the vaulting was arranged in cones having the ribs worked on. Eight ribs started from each column and were

¹ *Rites of Durham* (Surtees Society, 1902), p. 34.

² *Wills. Arch. Mag.*, viii. 39.



Fig. 1. Procession doorway from cloister

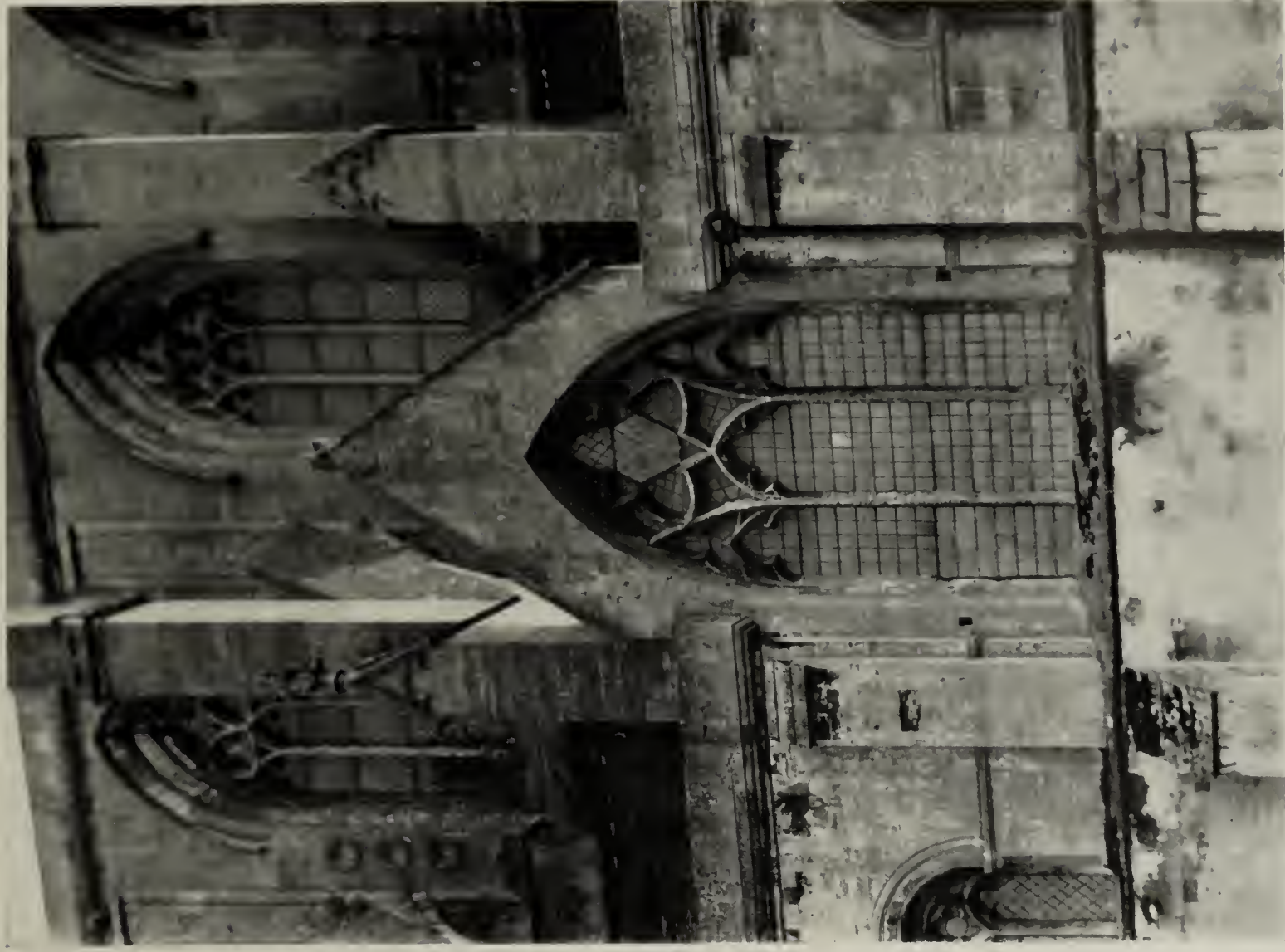


Fig. 2. Window of north chapel of nave

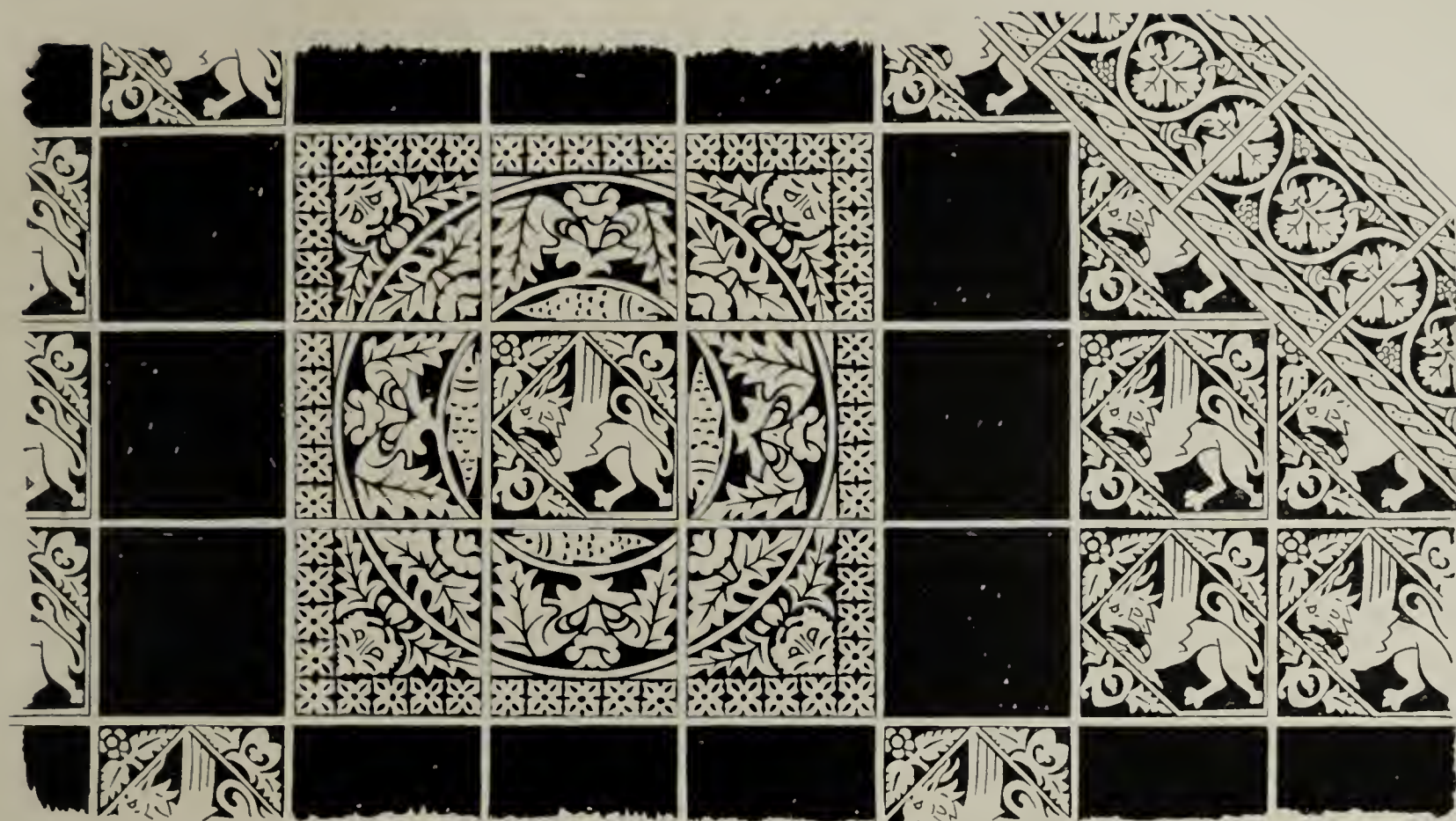


Fig. 7. Tile pavement in north alley of cloister. (1/2)



Fig. 6. Tile pavement in east alley of cloister. (1/2)

doubled half-way up, and the heads of each panel were finished with trefoils. The spandrils between the cones were filled with circles containing large quatrefoils having foliated terminals and subdivided by smaller cusps, of which some had rose-like terminals and others were plain.

A fragment of the springing starting from a moulded corbel remains in the south-east angle, and the curve of the vaulting shows against the church wall. The processional doorway remains in the south-east bay, and consists of an archway on the outer face of the wall and a doorway on the inner, with a small porch between in the thickness of the aisle wall, and was made within the original processional doorway when the new cloister was built. The archway is four centred and richly feathered, but the cusp points are all broken off: the porch is covered with a small fan vault of similar design to that of the cloister, and the inner doorway was blocked after the Suppression by a wall which covers its features. A flight of steps led up from the cloister to the church through this porch-like doorway.

With the exception of Gloucester and Tewkesbury no other monastic cloister can boast such an elaborate ceiling, though that of St. Stephen's chapel in the palace of Westminster was of similar character. The pattern of the cones and spandrils at Malmesbury does not seem to have an exact parallel, but from the nature of the cusping the vault must be an early example and but little later than its rival.

The foundation of the three western bays of the north alley projected into the garth in order to support the lavatory opposite the frater door, as at Gloucester, Chester, and Christ Church, Canterbury.

The floors were laid with tiles at different periods, doubtless as the work above was completed. At the south end of the east alley a large area remained, but much damaged by the fall of the vaulting (fig. 6). The pattern was formed of squares of sixteen tiles set diagonally and separated by strips of narrow tiles. The squares were decorated with a circular band of roses surrounding four shields which met in the centre and bore the arms of Beauchamp of Warwick. The middle tiles had in all cases been replaced by tiles made purposely for the abbey bearing a griffin segreant on a shield, some with the letters W.C. and others with W.W. in the angles.

At the east end of the north alley was a patch of tiles much smaller than the last and of unusual design (fig. 7). They consist of sets of nine tiles with plain bands between. The middle tile of the set is again of different make from the others; it also bears a griffin segreant, but with the letters T.B. This set is alternated with groups of nine tiles, all composed of the griffin. The border next the garth is a fine pattern of vine leaves. Loose tiles bearing the arms of Mortimer, Beauchamp of Warwick, Berkeley, and Despenser were found in this alley.

Along the west alley was a considerable quantity of the pavement, but made up of various tiles, one group being of large tiles having four shields meeting in

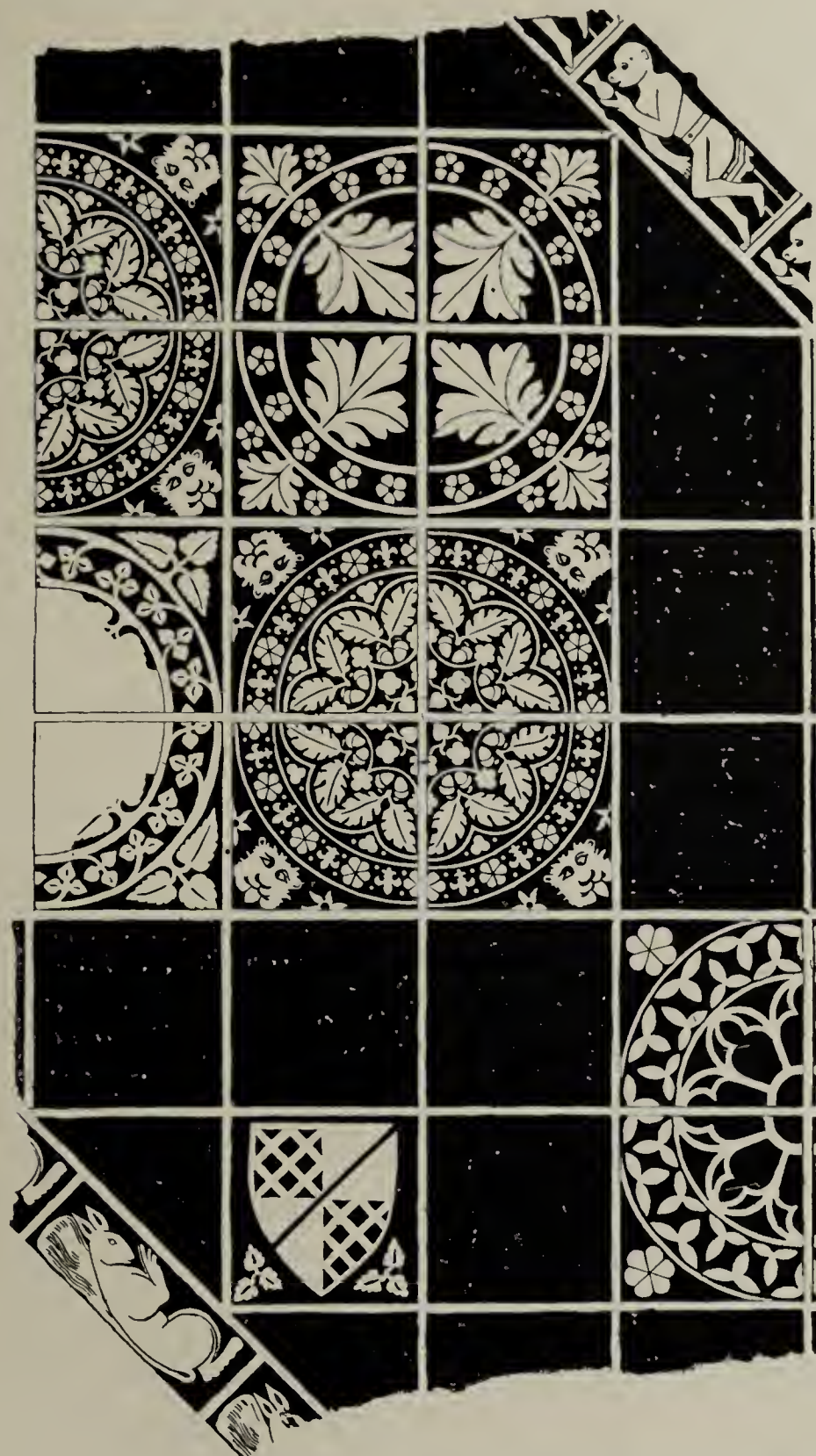


Fig. 8. Tile pavement found about 1800, now in the vestry. ($\frac{1}{6}$)

the centre bearing a bend raguly. Part of this alley was evidently found at the end of the eighteenth century, for Moffat records that—

In digging for stone in a garden adjoining the north-west end of the church, several years ago, the workmen came down upon a pavement of square stained tiles. Very

lately the spot has been re-examined and a quantity of these curious tiles discovered. They are glazed, ornamented with roses, flowers-de-luce, and heads.¹

Some of these tiles are now preserved in the church and have borders formed of narrow tiles bearing squirrels and monkeys (fig. 8). With respect to the griffin segreant and the initials on the tiles, Aubrey relates that he could find no coat of Malmesbury Abbey, but mentions that ascribed to the abbey in King's frontispiece to Tanner (*on a chief argent a mitre and two crosiers proper over the leopards of England*), and adds 'by what authority I know not'.² It is suggested this is a purely fictitious coat of the sixteenth century, and that the griffin segreant was the real coat of arms of the abbey. This griffin occurs under the figure of our Lady on the thirteenth-century seal of the abbey; there was a street in Malmesbury of the same date known as Griffin's Lane; in later times there was a house called the Griffin; and in one of the foliated spandrils of the market cross is an inserted stone bearing the griffin segreant on a shield. Then come the three different patterns of the same coat of arms on the tiles in the cloister. Surely this general use of these arms in Malmesbury suggests that they were those of some influential person or body, and the only explanation of their occurrence in all these places is that they were the arms of the abbey. This being so, the initials on the tiles must be read as those of different abbats, and date the completion of various sections of the cloister, namely, W.C. for Walter de Camme, 1360-96; W.W. for Abbat William, 1423; and T.B. for Thomas Bristol, 1434-56.

Most of the main walls of the buildings round the cloister had been grubbed up, but a portion of the east wall, a fragment of the north wall towards its west end, and a length of the west wall near its north end remained.

Surrounding the cloister were the buildings required for the daily use of the convent, namely, the chapter-house, parlour, dorter, and frater, which, though not arranged on such a fixed plan as with the Cistercians, were still in a regular order of sequence. The chapter-house was always on the east side of the cloister, and the frater on the side opposite the church.

At Malmesbury the north transept overlapped the cloister some 39 ft., and next it northward would be the low passage or parlour leading to the monks' cemetery.

THE CHAPTER-HOUSE.

The chapter-house would adjoin the parlour, and there was found a considerable length of the foundation of its north wall; nothing of the south wall was found, owing to the rock being so near the surface at that place that no founda-

¹ *The History of Malmesbury*, J. M. Moffat (Tetbury, 1805), p. 65.

² *Wiltshire Collections*, p. 265.

tion was required. Various fragments of Norman character were unearthed, including some vaulting ribs, and it is probable that the room was covered by a single spanned vault as at Gloucester, Reading, and other Benedictine houses. William of Colerne 'caused the chapter-house as far as the walls to be removed and again put up the whole with new timber and covered with stone and alures in the circuit of the chapter-house'.¹ Whether any work beyond a new roof and parapet was done at this period is not recorded. At the Suppression the chapter-house was covered with lead.²

THE DORTER.

Owing to the fall of the ground some 40 ft. northward from the chapter-house, the dorter could not have occupied its usual position of a range running north and south, but must have been placed east and west parallel with the church, as at Gloucester and Winchester. It had its roof removed and covered with stone and new alures made by William of Colerne like the chapter-house.³ Nothing whatever remains of it.

THE FRATER.

The frater was on the north side of the cloister, and seems to have had a subvault. A fragment of a foundation was found in the bank at 20 ft. from the cloister wall, which if it was the main north wall would cause the frater to be unusually narrow. The roof was covered with lead.⁴

There was a meat frater or misericord⁵ at Malmesbury, but whether it was a distinct building as at Peterborough and Westminster, or a loft over the west end of the frater itself as at Worcester and Durham, it is impossible to say.

THE KITCHEN.

At the west end of the frater, as might be expected, was the convent kitchen. It was standing in part at the end of the seventeenth century, and Aubrey remarks that 'on the N. West side of the Abbey Church stand the ruins of the kitchen on four strong freestone pillars'.⁶ From this it is reasonable to suppose that the chimney stood in the middle of the room over fireplaces supported on four strong pillars, and that the room itself would be square or octagonal, the surrounding walls having gone when Aubrey wrote. Abbat

¹ See Appendix I.

³ See Appendix I.

⁵ *Reg. Malmes.*, ii. 382.

² See Appendix II.

⁴ See Appendix II.

⁶ *Wiltshire Collections*, p. 260.

William of Colerne made three ovens next the convent kitchen, probably for making pastry, as he had already made the bakehouse anew.¹

Nothing has been found to indicate if there was a range of buildings along the west side of the cloister. This occurred at Christ Church, Canterbury, Norwich, and Bardney, but was absent at Westminster, St. Augustine's, Canterbury, and Gloucester.

Part of one of the numerous buildings which stood to the west of the cloister remains incorporated with the Bell Hotel. In its north wall is a thirteenth-century window of two lights with shafted jambs. On the first floor is a fine room having a ceiling of the fifteenth century formed of deeply moulded beams, and in the north-west angle of the room is an arched doorway. There is no means of identifying this building with certainty, but it was possibly one of the guest-houses.

Eastward of the site of the dormer is the present 'Abbey House', which for the most part is 'the new dwelling house . . . of about Edw. 6th architecture',² but under the northern side is a subvault, of the late thirteenth century, placed east and west. This was divided into two chambers, and had a row of columns down the middle.

The western chamber is 39 ft. long by 23½ ft. wide, and is of four bays. The central columns and the vaulting have been destroyed, but the springers supported on moulded corbels and the wall ribs remain. The north, west, and a bay and a half of the south walls remain. The first has in each bay a tall lancet having the internal splays of rounded form on plan, presumably to take window seats. The west end and the remaining part of the south side are blank, and there is no indication of how the chamber was gained. Externally on the north side were buttresses at either end and one in the middle of its length, but all except that at the west end have been chopped off lineable with the wall. The stones of their re-entering angles alone indicate their existence.

The eastern chamber is 29½ ft. in length, and of the same width as the other, from which it was divided by a wall 3 ft. in thickness, now destroyed. This chamber is of three bays, but has only two windows to the north, the middle bay being blank with a buttress in the middle of it and not opposite the vault springers. There were no windows in the east wall or the bay and a half which remains of the south side, and, like its companion, there is no sign of any entrance.

At the present both chambers are filled with rubbish almost to the springing of the vaulting, and are used for a brushing room and housing fuel.

Of the superstructure nothing whatever remains. There is a wall 5½ ft. thick,

¹ See Appendix I.

² *Wiltshire Collections*, p. 259.

in line southward of the east end of the subvault, in which is a segmental-headed doorway of a single member. To the north of this doorway in the thickness of the wall is the pit of a wardrobe from an upper floor. Eastward from this runs a thick wall for 31 ft., having a chamfered plinth on its north face some 8 ft. below the level of the ground, but nothing could be found of the south wall of the apartment.

The style of the subvault suggests that the building was part of the infirmary built from the foundations¹ by Abbat William of Colerne, but its position adjoining the dormer indicates that its upper story was the reredorter of the monks. Both surmises may be correct, as the reredorter at Worcester, built a hundred years before, was certainly so arranged in connexion with the infirmary.

THE ABBAT'S LODGING.

Somewhere on the east side of the precinct was the abbat's lodging, for Abbat William of Colerne recovered two messuages next the abbat's garden and planted them with vines, and made an herbarium towards the king's wall.² This portion of the king's wall is that which was to be repaired by the almoner, namely, from the abbat's garden to the court of the Lord John (Maudit).³ The abbat's lodging was built by William of Colerne, who 'next the abbat's garden made a great and honest hall covered with stone, with a lesser hall towards the gable of the same hall, and of the house which was previously the hall he made an ordinary camera. Next the same hall he caused to be made a kitchen, and of the larder he rebuilt the walls and strengthened the beams, and covered it with stone.'⁴

At the Suppression the abbat's lodging was covered with lead,⁵ and was to remain undefaced. It consisted of 'the late abbotts lodginge and the new lodging adyoynyng, with kytchin, larder, Buttery, Pantery and houses of Offyce w^t lodgyngis theruppon buyldyd perteynyng to the same. The Abbotts Stable w^t the wolfe house, the Gate and houses over the same enclosing the quadrante of the seyde Buyldynges.'⁶ And the custody of these was granted to Sir Edward Baynton of Bromham.⁷

In conclusion, the writer cannot close this paper without expressing his indebtedness to the Lord Bishop of Bristol for hearty co-operation and sympathy at all times with his work both professionally and archaeologically; to Mr. E. S. Mackirdy, for ready permission and very material help toward the excavations

¹ See Appendix I.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Reg. Malmes.*, i. 136.

⁴ See Appendix I.

⁵ See Appendix II.

⁶ See Appendix IV.

⁷ See Appendix II.

of the cloister, and access at all times to the rest of his property; to the Vicar of Malmesbury, the Rev. Canon C. D. H. McMillan, and to Mr. J. Moore, for generous permission to examine the respective parts of the abbey in their charge; to Mr. W. S. Brakspear, for the loan of the negatives for plates XLVII, 1, XLVIII, 1 and 2, L, 1, LI, 1 and 2, LII, 1 and 2, LIII, 1, and LV, 1 and 2; and last, but not least, to his old friend Dr. W. H. St. John Hope, for the transcript of the documents contained in the Appendices II, III, and IV, and various suggestions as to the ritual arrangements of the church.

APPENDIX I

REGISTRUM MALMESBURIENSE. (Rolls Series, 1880.) ii. 365.

WILLIAM COLERNE.

De edificiis factis infra abbathiam et per diversa maneria.

Juxta gardenum abbatis fecit aulam magnam et honestam, et aliam aulam minorem ad gabulum ejusdem aulae, petra coopertam.

Et de domo quae prius aula fuit, cameram ordinari fecit.

Et juxta eandem aulam fieri fecit unam coquinam.

Et lardarium fecit renovari muris, et tignis augmentari, et petra cooperiri.

Et cum idem abbas comparaverat de Radulpho de Porta et de uxore quondam Thurstani le Brasur, mesuagia eorum cum curtillagiis juxta gardenum abbatis jacentibus, idem abbas in ipsa placea fecit quandam vineam plantari, et eam circumquaque muro lapideo includi.

Fecit etiam juxta eandem vineam unum herbarium versus murum regium.

Fecit etiam in gardino abbatis vineas et pomeria ubique plantari.

Fecit etiam de mercata quandam placeam capi ad carpentriam, quam circumquaque muro lapideo fecit includi.

Fecitque juxta eandem carpentriam duas domos.

Fecit etiam infirmariam tignis et furcis et aliquantulum muro renovari et petra cooperiri.

Postea dormitorium usque ad muros fecit prosterni, et super eosdem muros in utraque parte quasdam aluras fecit construi, et novo maeremio cum tignis ante existentibus renovari, et petra cooperiri.

Fecit etiam capitulum usque ad muros prosterni, et iterum novo maeremio ex toto erigi et petra cooperiri, et aluras in circuitu capituli.

Postea in aula hospitium tres fieri fecit fenestras.

Postea unum gernerium fieri fecit juxta pistrinum, et domum quae aliquando gernerium fuit, addidit ad cellarium.

Vetus etiam bracinum usque ad terram fecit prosterni, et illud novis muris et novo maeremio construi fecit et relevari.

In occidentali autem parte ejusdem bracini, fecit unam domum ad equos longae carectae reponendos.

Fabricam etiam novam fecit et eandem petra fecit cooperiri.

A carcere etiam usque ad stabulum sacristae fieri fecit unam domum, cujus vero primam partem assignavit ad pauperes, et alteram partem ad stabulum equorum.

Juxta stabulum hospitium, unum domum fecit ad equos reponendos.

Fecitque molendinum.

Et capellam Sancti Aldhelmi in gardino.

Fecit etiam tres furnos juxta coquinam conventus.

Et cumulum de camera abbatis de novo construi.

Et infirmitorium a fundamento aedificari.

APPENDIX II

AUGMENTATION OFFICE MISCELLANEOUS BOOK 494, fols. 34-44.

Malmesbury.

Surrend^d 15 Dec. 31 H. VIII (1539).

Clear yearly value £830. 15½^d.

Pensions to Abbot & 21 monks.

Houses & Buylding℥

Appointed to Remayn undefaced.

The late Abbott℥ lodging | w^t the New lodging adioyning. | the Kitchyn Larder
Buttre and | Payntre w^t the lodging℥ over | the same. The late Abbott℥ Stable | the
Wolle house The Barne at | Spittell gate. The Gatehouse | which encloseth the
Inner | Courte and the Gatehouse which encloseth the Utter | Courte.

The Custodie and fferm^r | thereof graunted to Sir | Edward Baynton, Knight.

Demed to be superfluous.

The Church Cloister and Chapelles | adioyning The Dormytory Chaptre | house
ffraytre Barbary Infir | mary w^t all th lodging℥ to | the aioyning The Cellerers |
Chambre The Squiers Chambre | Seint Mary hous the Chaundry | the Convent
Kitchyn. All the | houses in the Sextrey ende The | Styward℥ lodging the Storehous |
the Slatt^r hous the Gestyn Stable | and all oder houses in the | utter Courte.

Commytted unto the | Custodie of Willm Stumpe deputie | to Sir E. Bainton K.
their salfety | to be kepte to thuse of the | King℥ Majestie.

Leades Remayning

viz. vpon

The Church Quere Iles Steples | ffrayter chaptrehous or Lady | Chapell. The late
Abbott℥ | Lodging and oder houses | there estemed to

cxx ffoders.

Belles Remayning

In the Steples ther ^{ix}vij poiz by | estimaton

xvⁱⁱⁱ weight.

Juelles reserved

To thuse of the King℥ Magestie | Myters garnished w^t Silver | gilte small Peerles and
Counter | sette Stooones j.

Plate of Silver reserved

To thuse of the King℥ Magestie viz

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Silver gilte | clxxiiij oz | } Dlxxiiij oz |
| Silver pcell gilte | ccv oz | |
| Silver white | ciiijxv oz | |

Ornament℥ reserved

To the same use viz.

None

Other ornaments sold for £208 13s. 4d. altered to £211 13s. 4d.

APPENDIX III

PATENT ROLL, 36 HENRY VIII, PART 25 M $\frac{10}{41}$.

[In consideration of sum of £1516 15 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ paid by William Stumpe 'generosus' Property in Rodborne late Malmesbury abbey's Brinkworth &c.]

$\frac{8}{43}$) 'Damus eciam pro consideratione | predicta ac ex certa sciencia et | mero motu nostris per presentes | concedimus prefato Willelmo Stumpe | totum illum scitum septum | circuitum ambitum et precinctum | dicti nuper Monasterii de Malmesbery | cum suis iuribus et pertinenciis universis ac omnia et singula | mesuagia molendina domus edificia | structura ortos pomaria gardina | stabula columbaria stagna vinar' | aquas piscaria et piscaciones terram | et solum nostrum infra eundem | scitum septum circuitum ambitum | seu precinctum ejusdem nuper | Monasterii existeñ. Ac eciam omnia | illa ortos pomaria et gardina cum | pertinenciis infra eundem scitum | ejusdem nuper Monasterii existeñ vocat le ffermery Orchard et le | Chamberers Orchard quomodo | spectañ sive pertineñ. . . .

Exceptis tamen ac nobis heredibus | et successoribus nostris omnino | reservatis omnibus et singulis | campanis et cooperturis plumbiis | ac toto plumbo de in vel super | quibuscumque edificiis infra dictum | scitum dicti nuper Monasterii de | Malmesbury aut de in vel super | aliqua inde parcella existeñ preter gutteras plumbias et plumbum in fenestris

&c &c

Stump's application for grant is dated 24 Feb. 1543-4, 35 H. VIII, and signed by himself.

APPENDIX IV

AUGMENTATION OFFICE PARTICULARS OF GRANTS, 35 HENRY VIII (1543-4).

Stumpe William
Com. Wiltes. The late Monastery of Malmesbury.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|----|----------------|----------------|---|-----------------|--|---|
| Assigned to Remayne | that is to say | The late abbott℥ lodginge and the new lodging adyoynynge with kytchin larder Buttery Pantery and houses of Offyce w ^t lodgyngis theruppon buyldyd pteynyng to the same Thabbott℥ Stable w ^t the wolfe house the Gate and houses over the same enclosing the quadrante of the seyde Buyldyng℥ the Barne at the Spytells Gate and the uttr ^r gate houses of the basse Court pryced at | | | | | | | |
| | | The Church w ^t the Cloyestr ^r and Chapell adyoynynge The Dormytory wythe the Chapterhouse The ffrayter and lyberary The ffarmery with all the lodgyng adyoynynge The Sextery ende The Cellerers Chamber w ^t the Squyers Chamber the Seynt Mary house with the chaundery and Convent Kytchyn w ^t all the houses there the Store house in the Court the Schlatt house the Gesten Stable w ^t houses adyoynynge and the Steward℥ lodginge | li | c ^s | c ^s | xiiij ^{li} vj ^s viij ^d | xl ^s | | |
| Summe of the value of all the housez & buylding℥ w ^{tin} the pcyncte of the seyde late Monasterye. | | | | | | | | | |
| Appoynted to be Rased and Solde | that is to say | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | clv ^{li} vj ^s viij ^d ex ^r p Willm. Berners auditozem. |
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